# Paradiſe Regain'd.

A

# POEM.

In IV BOOKS.

To which is added

## Samſon Agoniſtes.

The Author
*JOHN MILTON.*

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# Paradiſe Regain'd.

## BOOK. I.

I Who e're while the happy Garden ſung,
By one man's Diſobedience loſt, now ſing
Recover'd Paradiſe to all mankind,
By one man's firm Obedience fully try'd
Through all temptation, and the Tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls't,
And *Eden* rais'd in the waſt Wilderneſs.

Thou Spirit who ledſt this glorious Eremite
Into the Deſart, his Victorious Field
Againſt the Spiritual Foe, and brought'ſt him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inſpire,
As thou art wont, my prompted Song elſe mute,
And bear through highth or depth of Nature's bounds
With proſperous wing full ſumm'd to tell of deeds
Above Heroic, though in ſecret done,
And unrecorded left through many an Age,
Worthy t' have not remain'd ſo long unſung.

Now had the great Proclaimer with a voice
More awful than the ſound of Trumpet, cri'd
Repentance, and Heaven's Kingdom nigh at hand
To all Baptiz'd: to his great Baptiſm flock'd
With awe the Regions round, and with them came
From *Nazareth* the Son of *Joſeph* deem'd

To the flood *Jordan*, came as then obſcure,
Unmarkt, unknown; but him the Baptiſt ſoon
Deſcri'd, divinely warn'd, and witneſs bore
As to his worthier, and would have reſign'd
To him his Heavenly Office, nor was long
His witneſs unconfirm'd: on him baptiz'd
Heaven open'd, and in likeneſs of a Dove
The Spirit deſcended, while the Fathers voice
From Heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adverſary, who roving ſtill
About the world, at that Aſſembly fam'd
Would not be laſt, and with the voice divine
Nigh Thunder-ſtruck, th' exalted man, to whom
Such high atteſt was given, a while ſurvey'd
With wonder, then with envy fraught, and rage,
Flies to his place, nor reſts, but in mid air
To Council ſummons all his mighty Peers,
Within thick Clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy Conſiſtory; and them amidſt
With looks againſt and ſad he thus beſpake.

O ancient Powers of Air and this wide world,
For much more willingly I mention Air,
This our old Conqueſt, than remember Hell
Our hated habitation; well ye know
How many Ages, as the years of men,
This Univerſe we have poſſeſt, and rul'd
In manner at our will th' affairs of Earth,
Since *Adam* and his facil conſort *Eve*
Loſt Paradiſe deceiv'd by me, though ſince
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the Seed of *Eve*
Upon my head, long the decrees of Heav'n
Delay, for longeſt time to him is ſhort;

And

And now too ſoon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compaſt, wherein we
Muſt bide the ſtroak of that long threatn'd wound,
At leaſt if ſo we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infring'd, our freedom and our being.
In this fair Empire won of Earth and Air;
For this ill news I bring, the Woman's ſeed
Deſtin'd to this, is late of Woman born,
His Birth to our juſt fear gave no ſmall cauſe,
But his growth now to youth's full flow'r, diſplaying
All vertue, grace, and wiſdom to atchieve
Things higheſt, greateſt, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great Prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is ſent Harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the Conſecrated ſtream
Pretends to waſh off ſin, and fit them ſo
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their King; all come,
And he himſelf among them was Baptiz'd,
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The Teſtimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the Nations may not doubt; I ſaw
The Prophet do him reverence, on him riſing
Out of the Water, Heav'n above the Clouds
Unfold her Cryſtal Doors, thence on his head
A perfect Dove deſcend, what e're it meant,
And out of Heav'n the Soveraign voice I hear
This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
His Mother then is mortal, but his Sire,
He who obtains the Monarchy of Heav'n,
And what will he not do to advance his Son?
His firſt-begot we know, and ſore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep;

Who this is we muſt learn, for Man he ſeems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpſes of his Father's glory ſhine,
Ye ſee our danger on the utmoſt edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But muſt with ſometing ſudden be oppos'd,
Not force, but well couch'd fraud, well woven ſnares,
E're in the head of Nations he appear
Their King, their Leader, and Supream on Earth.
I, when no other durſt, ſole undertook
The diſmal expedition to find out
And ruine *Adam*, and the exploit perform'd
Succeſsfully; a calmer Voyage now
Will waft me; and the way found proſp'rous once
Induces beſt to hope of like ſucceſs.
He ended, and his words impreſſion left
Of much amazement to th' infernal Crew,
Diſtracted and ſurpriz'd with deep diſmay
At theſe ſad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main Enterprize
To him their great Dictator, whoſe attempt
At firſt againſt mankind ſo well had thriv'd
In *Adam*'s overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep-vaulted Den to dwell in light,
Regents and Potentates, and Kings, yea Gods
Of many a pleaſant Realm and Province wide.
So to the Coaſt of *Jordan* he directs
His eaſie ſteps; girded with ſnaky wiles,
Where he might likelieſt find this new-declar'd,
This Man of men, atteſted Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try;
So to ſubvert whom he ſuſpected rais'd

To

To end his Reign on Earth ſo long enjoy'd:
But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd
The purpos'd Counſel pre-ordain'd and fixt
Of the moſt High, who in full frequence bright
Of Angels, thus to *Gabriel* ſmiling ſpake.
*Gabriel* this day by proof thou ſhalt behold,
Thou and all Angels converſant on Earth
With man or mens affairs, how I begin
To verifie that ſolemn Meſſage late,
On which I ſent thee to the Virgin pure
In *Galilee*, that ſhe ſhould bear a Son
Great in Renown, and call'd the Son of God;
Then toldſt her, doubting how theſe things could be
To her a Virgin, that on her ſhould come
The Holy Ghoſt, and the Power of the Higheſt
O're-ſhadow her: this Man born and now up-grown,
To ſhew him worthy of his Birth Divine
And high Prediction, henceforth I expoſe
To Satan; let him tempt and now aſſay
His utmoſt ſubtilty, becauſe he boaſts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his Apoſtaſie; he might have learnt
Leſs overweening, ſince he fail'd in *Job*,
Whoſe conſtant perſeverance overcame
What e're his cruel malice could invent.
He now ſhall know I can produce a Man
Of female Seed, far abler to reſiſt
All his ſollicitations, and at length
All his vaſt force, and drive him back to Hell,
Winning by Conqueſt what the firſt man loſt
By fallacy ſurpriz'd. But firſt I mean
To exerciſe him in the Wilderneſs,
There he ſhall firſt lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare, e're I ſend him forth

To conquer Sin and Death the two grand foes,
By Humiliation and ſtrong Sufferance:
His weakneſs ſhall o'recome Satanick ſtrength
And all the world, and maſs of ſinful fleſh;
That all the Angels and Ætherial Powers,
They now, and men hereafter may diſcern,
From what conſummate vertue I have choſe
This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn Salvation for the Sons of men.

So ſpake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring ſtood a ſpace, then into Hymns
Burſt forth, and in Celeſtial meaſures mov'd,
Circling the Throne and Singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:

Victory and Triumph to the Son of God
Now entring his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquiſh by wiſdom helliſh wiles.
The Father knows the Son; therefore ſecure
Ventures his filial Vertue, though untri'd,
Againſt what e're may tempt, what e're ſeduce,
Allure, or terrifie, or undermine.
Be fruſtrate all ye ſtratagems of Hell,
And devilliſh machinations come to nought.

So they in Heav'n their Odes and Vigils tun'd:
Mean while the Son of God, who yet ſome days
Lodg'd in *Bethabara* where *John* baptiz'd,
Muſing and much revolving in his breſt,
How beſt the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way firſt
Publiſh his God-like Office now mature,
One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;

And

And his deep thoughts, the better to converſe
With ſolitude, till far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and ſtep by ſtep led on,
He entred now the bordering deſart wild,
And with dark ſhades and rocks environ'd round,
His holy meditation thus purſu'd.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakn'd in me ſwarm, while I conſider
What from within I feel my ſelf, and hear,
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill ſorting with my preſent ſtate compar'd.
When I was yet a Child, no childiſh play
To me was pleaſing, all my mind was ſet
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be publick good; my ſelf I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things: therefore above my years,
The Law of God I read and found it ſweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To ſuch perfection, that e're yet my age
Had meaſur'd twice ſix years, at our great Feaſt
I went into the Temple, there to hear
The Teachers of our Law, and to propoſe
What might improve my knowledge or their own;
And was admir'd by all, yet this not all
To which my Spirit aſpir'd, victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
To reſcue *Iſrael* from the *Roman* yoke,
Then to ſubdue and quel o're all the earth
Brute violence and proud Tyrannick pow'r,
Till truth were freed, and equity reſtor'd:
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly firſt
By winning words to conquer willing hearts,

And make perſwaſion do the work of fear;
At leaſt to try, and teach the erring Soul
Not wilfully miſ-doing, but unaware
Miſled; the ſtubborn only to deſtroy.
Theſe growing thoughts my Mother ſoon perceiving
By words at times caſt forth inly rejoyc'd,
And ſaid to me apart, high are thy thoughts
O Son, but nouriſh them and let them ſoar
To what hight ſacred vertue and true worth
Can raiſe them, though above example high;
By matchleſs Deeds expreſs thy matchleſs Sire.
For know, thou art no Son of mortal man,
Though men eſteem thee low of Parentage,
Thy Father is the Eternal King who rules
All Heaven and Earth, Angels and Sons of men,
A meſſenger from God fore-told thy Birth
Conceiv'd in me a Virgin, he foretold
Thou ſhouldſt be great and ſit on *David*'s Throne,
And of thy Kingdom there ſhall be no end.
At thy Nativity a glorious Quire
Of Angels in the fields of *Bethlehem* ſung
To Shepherds watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Meſſiah now was born,
Where they might ſee him, and to thee they came;
Directed to the Manger where thou lay'ſt,
For in the Inn was left no better room:
A Star, not ſeen before in Heaven appearing
Guided the Wiſe Men thither from the Eaſt,
To honour thee with Incenſe, Myrrh, and Gold,
By whoſe bright courſe led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy Star new grav'n in Heav'n,
By which they knew the King of *Iſrael* born.
Juſt *Simeon* and Prophetick *Anna*, warn'd
By Viſion found thee in the Temple, and ſpake

Before

Before the Altar and the veſted Prieſt,
Like things of thee to all that preſent ſtood,
This having heard, ſtraight I again revolv'd
The Law and Prophets, ſearching what was writ
Concerning the Meſſiah, to our Scribes
Known partly, and ſoon found of whom they ſpake
I am; this chiefly, that my way muſt lie
Through many a hard aſſay even to the death,
E're I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
Or work Redemption for mankind, whoſe ſins
Full weight muſt be transferr'd upon my head.
Yet neither thus diſhearten'd or diſmay'd,
The time prefixt I waited, when behold
The Baptiſt, (of whoſe birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by ſight) now come, who was to come
Before Meſſiah and his way prepare.
I as all others to his Baptiſm came,
Which I believ'd was from above; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudeſt voice proclaim'd
Me him (for it was ſhew'n him ſo from Heaven)
Me him whoſe Harbinger he was; and firſt
Refus'd on me his Baptiſm to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won;
But as I roſe out of the laving ſtream,
Heaven open'd her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit deſcended on me like a Dove,
And laſt the ſum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounc'd me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more ſhould live obſcure,
But openly begin, as beſt becomes
The Authority which I deriv'd from Heaven.
And now by ſome ſtrong motion I am led

Into this Wilderneſs, to what intent
I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So ſpake our Morning Star then in his riſe,
And looking round on every ſide beheld
A pathleſs Deſart, dusk with horrid ſhades;
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by humane ſteps untrod;
And he ſtill on was led, but with ſuch thoughts
Accompanied of things paſt and to come
Lodg'd in his breaſt, as well might recommend
Such Solitude before choiceſt Society.
Full forty days he paſs'd, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in ſhady vale, each night
Under the covert of ſome ancient Oak,
Or Cedar, to defend him from the dew,
Or harbour'd in one Cave, is not reveal'd;
Nor taſted humane food, nor hunger felt
Till thoſe days ended, hunger'd then at laſt
Among wild Beaſts: they at his ſight grew mild,
Nor ſleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm,
The Lion and fierce Tiger glar'd aloof.
But now an aged man in Rural weeds,
Following, as ſeem'd, the queſt of ſome ſtray Ewe,
Or wither'd ſticks to gather; which might ſerve
Againſt a Winters day when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from Field at Eve,
He ſaw approach, who firſt with curious eye
Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd ſpake.

Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this place
So far from path or road of men, who paſs

In

In Troop or Caravan, for ſingle none
Durſt ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His Carcaſs, pin'd with hunger and with droughth?
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou ſeem'ſt the man, whom late
Our new baptizing Prophet at the Ford
Of *Jordan* honour'd ſo, and call'd thee Son
Of God; I ſaw and heard, for we ſometimes
Who dwelt this wild, conſtrain'd by want, come forth
To Town or Village nigh (nigheſt is far)
Where ought we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happ'ns new; Fame alſo finds us out.

To whom the Son of God. Who brought me hither
Will bring me hence, no other Guide I ſeek.

By Miracle he may, reply'd the Swain,
What other way I ſee not, for we here
Live on tough roots and ſtubs, to thirſt inur'd
More than the Camel, and to drink go far,
Men to much miſery and hardſhip born;
But if thou be the Son of God, Command
That out of theſe hard ſtones be made thee bread;
So ſhalt thou ſave thyſelf and us relieve
With Food, whereof we wretched ſeldom taſte.

He ended, and the Son of God reply'd.
Think'ſt thou ſuch force in Bread? is it not written
(For I diſcern thee other than thou ſeem'ſt)
Man lives not by Bread only, but each Word
Proceeding from the mouth of God; who fed
Our Fathers here with Manna; in the Mount
*Moſes* was forty days, nor eat nor drank,
And forty days *Eliah* without food

Wandred this barren waſte, the ſame I now:
Why doſt thou then ſuggeſt to me diſtruſt,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

Whom thus anſwer'd th' Arch Fiend now undiſguis'd.
'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate,
Who leagu'd with millions more in raſh revolt
Kept not my happy Station, but was driv'n;
With them from bliſs to the bottomleſs deep,
Yet to that hideous place not ſo confin'd
By rigour unconniving, but that oft
Leaving my dolorous Priſon I enjoy
Large liberty to round this Globe of Earth,
Or range in th' Air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns
Hath he excluded my reſort ſometimes.
I came among the Sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands *Uzzean Job*
To prove him, and illuſtrate his high worth;
And when to all his Angels he propos'd
To draw the proud King *Ahab* into fraud
That he might fall in *Ramoth*, they demuring,
I undertook that Office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering Prophets glibb'd with lies
To his deſtruction, as I had in charge.
For what he bids I do; though I have loſt
Much luſtre of my native brightneſs, loſt
To be belov'd of God, I have not loſt
To love, at leaſt contemplate and admire
What I ſee excellent in good, or fair,
Or vertuous, I ſhould ſo have loſt all ſenſe.
What can be then leſs in me than deſire
To ſee thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wiſdom, and behold thy God-like deeds?

Men

Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind: why ſhould I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence, by them
I loſt not what I loſt, rather by them
I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
Copartner in theſe Regions of the World,
If not diſpoſer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by preſages and ſigns,
And anſwers, oracles, portents and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they ſay excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my miſery and wo.
At firſt it may be; but long ſince with wo
Never acquainted, now I feel by proof,
That fellowſhip in pain divides not ſmart,
Nor lightens aught each mans peculiar load.
Small conſolation then, were man adjoin'd:
This wounds me moſt (what can it leſs) that Man,
Man fall'n ſhall be reſtor'd, I never more.

To whom our Saviour ſternly thus reply'd.
Deſervedly thou griev'ſt, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boaſt'ſt releaſe from Hell, and leave to come
Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns; thou com'ſt indeed,
As a poor miſerable captive thrall,
Comes to the place where he before had ſat
Among the Prime in Splendour, now depos'd,
Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, ſhun'd,
A ſpectacle of ruin or of ſcorn
To all the Hoſt of Heav'n; the happy place
Imports to thee no happineſs, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment, repreſenting
Loſt bliſs, to thee no more communicable,

So never more in Hell than when in Heaven.
But thou art ſerviceable to Heav'ns King.
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleaſure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice mov'd thee to miſdeem
Of righteous *Job*, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions, but his patience won?
The other ſervice was thy choſen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy ſuſtenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'ſt to truth; all Oracles
By thee are giv'n, and what confeſt more true
Among the Nations? that hath been thy craft,
By mixing ſomewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy anſwers, what but dark
Ambiguous and with double ſenſe deluding,
Which they who ask'd have ſeldom underſtood,
And not well underſtood as good not known?
Who ever by conſulting at thy ſhrine
Return'd the wiſer, or the more inſtruct
To flie or follow what concern'd him moſt,
And run not ſooner to his fatal ſnare?
For God hath juſtly giv'n the Nations up
To thy Deluſions; juſtly, ſince they fell
Idolatrous, but when his purpoſe is
Among them to declare his Providence
To thee not known, whence haſt thou then thy truth,
But from him or his Angels Preſident
In every Province, who themſelves diſdaining
To approach thy Temples, give thee in command
What to the ſmalleſt tittle thou ſhalt ſay
To thy Adorers; thou with trembling fear,
Or like a Fawning Paraſite obey'ſt;
Then to thy ſelf aſcrib'ſt the truth foretold.

But

But this thy glory ſhall be ſoon retrench'd;
No more ſhall thou by oracling abuſe
The Centiles; henceforth Oracles are ceaſt,
And thou no more with Pomp and Sacrifice
Shalt be enquir'd at *Delphos* or elſe-where,
At leaſt in vain, for they ſhall find thee mute.
God hath now ſent his loving Oracle
Into the World to teach his final will,
And ſends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
In pious Hearts, and inward Oracle
To all truth requiſite for men to know.

So ſpake our Saviour; but the ſubtle Fiend,
Though inly ſtung with anger and diſdain,
Diſſembl'd, and this Anſwer ſmooth return'd.

Sharply thou haſt inſiſted on rebuke,
And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
But miſery hath wreſted from me; where
Eaſily canſt thou find one miſerable,
And not inforc'd oft-times to part from truth;
It it may ſtand him more inſtead to lye,
Say and unſay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art plac't above me, thou art Lord;
From thee I can and muſt ſubmis endure
Check or reproof, and glad to eſcape ſo quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue diſcourſt, pleaſing to th'ear,
And tuneable as Silvan Pipe or Song;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? moſt men admire
Vertue, who follow not her lore: permit me
To hear thee when I come (ſince no man comes)
And talk at leaſt, though I deſpair to attain.

Thy Father, who is holy, wiſe and pure,
Suffers the Hypocrite or Atheous Prieſt
To tread his Sacred Courts, and miniſter
About his Altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchſaf'd his voice
To *Balaam* Reprobate, a Prophet yet
Inſpir'd; diſdain not ſuch acceſs to me.

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow:
Thy coming hither, though I know thy ſcope,
I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'ſt
Permiſſion from above; thou canſt not more.

He added not; and Satan bowing low
His gray diſſimulation, diſappear'd
Into thin Air diffus'd: for now began
Night with her ſullen wings to double-ſhade
The Deſart, Fowls in their clay neſts were couch't;
And now wild Beaſts came forth the woods to roam.

*The End of the firſt Book.*

PARADISE

# Paradiſe Regain'd.

## BOOK. II.

MEan while the new-baptiz'd, who yet remain'd
At *Jordan* with the Baptiſt, and had ſeen
Him whom they heard ſo late expreſly call'd
Jeſus Meſſiah Son of God declar'd,
And on that high Authority had believ'd,
And with him talkt, and with him lodg'd, I mean
*Andrew* and *Simon*, famous after known,
With others though in Holy Writ not nam'd,
Now miſſing him their Joy ſo lately found,
So lately found, and ſo abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt:
Sometimes they thought he might be only ſhewn,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
*Moſes* was in the Mount, and miſſing long;
And the great *Thisbite* who on fiery wheels
Rode up to Heaven, yet once again to come.
Therefore as thoſe young Prophets then with care
Sought loſt *Eliah*, ſo in each place theſe
Nigh to *Bethabara*; in *Jerico*
The City of Palms, *Ænon*, and *Salem* Old,
*Machærus* and each Town or City wall'd
On this ſide the broad lake *Genezaret*,
Or in *Perea*, but return'd in vain.
Then on the bank of *Jordan*, by a Creek:

Where winds with Reeds, and Oſiers whiſp'ring play
Plain Fiſhermen, no greater men them call,
Cloſe in a Cottage low together got
Their unexpected loſs and plaints out breath'd.
Alas, from that high hope to what relapſe
Unlook'd for are we fall'n, our eyes beheld
Meſſiah certainly now come, ſo long
Expected of our Fathers; we have heard
His words, his wiſdom full of grace and truth,
Now, now, for ſure, deliverance is at hand,
The Kingdom ſhall to *Iſrael* be reſtor'd:
Thus we rejoyc'd, but ſoon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze:
For whither is he gone, what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of *Iſrael*,
Send thy Meſſiah forth, the time is come;
Behold the Kings of the Earth how they oppreſs
Thy choſen, to what highth their pow'r unjuſt
They have exalted, and behind them caſt
All fear of thee, ariſe and vindicate
Thy Glory, free thy people from their yoke,
But let us wait; thus far he hath perform'd,
Sent his Anointed, and to us reaveal'd him,
By his great Prophet, pointed at and ſhown,
In publick, and with him we have convers'd;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his Providence; he will not fail
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his bleſt ſight, then ſnatch him hence,
Soon we ſhall ſee our hope, our joy return.

Thus they out of their plaints new hope reſume

To

To find whom at the firſt they found unſought:
But to his Mother *Mary*, when ſhe ſaw
Others return'd from Baptiſm, not her Son,
Nor left at *Jordan*, tidings of him none;
Within her breſt, though calm; her breſt though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubl'd thoughts, which ſhe in ſighs thus clad.

O what avails me now that honour high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that ſalute
Hale highly favour'd, among Women bleſt;
While I to ſorrows am no leſs advanc't,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other Women, by the birth I bore,
In ſuch a ſeaſon born when ſcarce a Shed
Could be obtain'd to ſhelter him or me
From the bleak air; a Stable was our warmth,
A Manger his, yet ſoon enforc't to fly
Thence into *Egypt*, till the Murd'rous King
Were dead, who ſought his life, and miſſing fill'd
With Infant blood the ſtreets of *Bethlehem*;
From *Egypt* home return'd, in *Nazareth*
Hath been our dwelling many years, his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little ſuſpicious to any King; but now
Full grown to Man, acknowledged, as I hear,
By *John* the Baptiſt, and in publik ſhown,
Son own'd from Heaven by his Father's voice;
I look'd for ſome great change; to Honour? no,
But trouble, as old *Simeon* plain fore-told,
That to the fall and riſing he ſhould be
Of many in *Iſrael*, and to a ſign
Spoken againſt, that through my very Soul
A ſword ſhall pierce, this is my favour'd lot,

My Exaltation to Afflictions high;
Afflicted I may be, it ſeems, and bleſt;
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? ſome great intent
Conceals him: when twelve years he ſcarce had ſeen,
I loſt him, but ſo found, as well I ſaw
He could not loſe himſelf; but went about
His Father's Buſineſs; what he meant I mus'd,
Since underſtand; much more his abſence now
Thus long to ſome great purpoſe he obſcures.
But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
My heart hath been a ſtore-houſe long of things
And ſayings laid up, portending ſtrange events.

Thus *Mary* pondring oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had paſs'd
Since firſt her Salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling:
The while her Son tracing the Deſart wild,
Sole but with holieſt Meditations fed,
Into himſelf deſcended, and at once
All his great work to come before him ſet;
How to begin, how to accompliſh beſt
His end of being on Earth, and miſſion high:
For Satan with ſlye preface to return
Had left him vacant, and with ſpeed was gon
Up to the middle Region of thick Air,
Where all his Potentates in Council ſate;
There without ſign of boaſt, or ſign of joy
Sollicitous and blank he thus began.

Princes, Heaven's ancient Sons, Æthereal Thrones,
Demonian Spirits now, from the Element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd,

Powers

Powers of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth beneath,
So may we hold our place and theſe mild ſeats
Without new trouble; ſuch an Enemy
Is ris'n to invade us, whom no leſs
Threat'ns our expulſion down to Hell;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Conſenting in full frequence was impower'd,
Have found him, view'd him, taſted him, but find
Far other labour to be undergon
Than when I dealt with *Adam* firſt of Men,
Though *Adam* by his Wives allurement fell,
However to this Man inferior far,
If he be Man by Mothers ſide at leaſt,
With more than humane gifts from Heaven adorn'd,
Perfections abſolute, Graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greateſt Deeds.
Therefore I am return'd, leſt confidence
Of my ſucceſs with *Eve* in Paradiſe
Deceive ye to perſuaſion over-ſure
Of like ſucceeding here; I ſummon all
Rather to be in readineſs, with hand
Or counſel to aſſiſt; leſt I who erſt
Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.

So ſpake the old Serpent doubting, and from all
With clamour was aſſur'd their utmoſt aid
At his command; when from amidſt them roſe
*Belial* the diſſoluteſt Spirit that fell,
The ſenſualleſt, and after *Aſmodai*
The fleſhlieſt Incubus, and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the faireſt found;

Many are in each Region paſſing fair
As the noon Skie; more like to Goddeſſes
Than Mortal Creatures, graceful and diſcreet,
Expert in amorous Arts, enchanting tongues
Perſuaſive, Virgin majeſty with mild
And ſweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach,
Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them tangl'd in Amorous Nets.
Such object hath the power to ſoft'n and tame
Severeſt temper, ſmooth the rugged'ſt brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope diſſolve,
Draw out with credulous deſire, and lead
At will the manlieſt, reſoluteſt breſt,
As the magnetic hardeſt Iron draws.
Women, when nothing elſe, beguil'd the heart
Of wiſeſt *Solomon*, and made him build,
And made him bow to the Gods of his Wives.

To whom quick anſwer Satan thus return'd.
*Belial*, in much uneven ſcale thou weigh'ſt
All others by thy ſelf; becauſe of old
Thou thy ſelf doat'ſt on woman-kind, admiring
Their ſhape, their colour, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'ſt, but taken with ſuch toys.
Before the Flood thou with thy luſty Crew,
Falſe titl'd Sons of God, roaming the Earth
Caſt wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupl'd with them, and begot a race.
Have we not ſeen, or by relation heard,
In Courts and Regal Chambers how thou lurk'ſt,
In Wood or Grove by moſſie Fountain ſide,
In Valley or green Meadow to way-lay
Some beauty rare, *Caliſto Clymene*,
*Daphne*, or *Semele*, *Antiopa*,

Or

Or *Amymone*, *Syrinx*, many more
Too long, then lay'ſt thy ſcapes on names ador'd,
*Apollo*, *Neptune*, *Jupiter* or *Pan*,
Satyr, or Fawn, or Silvan? But theſe haunts
Delight not all, among the Sons of Men,
How many have with a ſmile made ſmall account
Of beauty and her lures, eaſily ſcorn'd
All her aſſaults, on worthier things intent?

Remember that *Pellean* Conquerour,
A Youth, how all the Beauties of the Eaſt
He ſlightly view'd, and ſlightly overpaſs'd;
How he ſirnam'd of *Africa* diſmiſs'd
In his prime youth the fair *Iberian* Maid.
For *Solomon* he liv'd at eaſe, and full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher deſign than to enjoy his State;
Thence to the bait of Women lay expos'd;
But he whom we atempt is wiſer far
Than *Solomon*, of more exalted mind,
Made and ſet wholly on the accompliſhment
Of greateſt things, what Woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leiſure will vouchſafe an eye
Of fond deſire? or ſhould ſhe confident,
As ſitting Queen ador'd on Beauties Throne,
Deſcend with all her winning charms begirt
To enamour, as the Zone of *Venus* once
Wrought that effect on *Jove*, ſo Fables tell;
How would one look from his Majeſtick brow
Seated as on the top of Vertues hill,
Diſcount'nance her deſpis'd, and put to rout,
All her array; her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe? for Beauty ſtands

In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; ceaſe to admire, and all her Plumes
Fall flat and ſhrink into a trivial toy,
At every ſudden ſlighting quite abaſht:
Therefore with manlier objects we muſt try
His conſtancy, with ſuch as have more ſhew
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praiſe;
Rocks whereon greateſt Men have often wreck'd;
Or that which only ſeems to ſatisfie
Lawful deſires of Nature, not beyond;
And now I know he hungers where no food
Is to be found, in the wild Wilderneſs,
The reſt commit to me, I ſhall let paſs
No advantage, and his ſtrength as oft aſſay.

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud acclaim;
Then forthwith to him takes a choſen band
Of Spirits likeſt to himſelf in guile
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cauſe were to unfold ſome active Scene
Of various Perſons each to know his part;
Then to the Deſart takes with theſe his flight;
Where ſtill from ſhade to ſhade the Son of God
After forty days faſting had remain'd,
Now hungring firſt, and to himſelf thus ſaid.

Where will this end? four times ten days I have paſs'd
Wandring this woody maze, and humane Food
Nor taſted, nor had appetite; that Faſt
To Vertue I impute not, or count part
Of what I ſuffer here; if Nature need not,
Or God ſupport Nature without repaſt
Though needing, what praiſe is it to endure?
But now I feel, I hunger, which declares

Nature

Nature hath need of what ſhe asks; yet God
Can ſatisfie that need ſome other way,
Though hunger ſtill remain: ſo it remain
Without this bodies waſting, I content me,
And from the ſting of Famine fear no harm;
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
Me hungring more to do my Fathers will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Commun'd in ſilent walk, then laid him down
Under the hoſpitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven; there he ſlept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, Nature's refreſhment ſweet;
Him thought, he by the Brook of *Cherith* ſtood
And ſaw the Ravens with their horny beaks
Food to *Elijah* bringing Even and Morn,
Though ravenous, taught to abſtain from what they (brought:
He ſaw the Prophet alſo how he fled
Into the Deſart, and how there he ſlept
Under a Juniper; then how awak't,
He found his Supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the Angel was bid riſe and eat,
And eat the ſecond time after repoſe,
The ſtrength whereof ſuffic'd him forty days;
Sometimes that with *Elijah* he partook,
Or as a gueſt with *Daniel* at his Pulſe.
Thus wore out night, and now the Herald Lark
Left his ground-neſt, high towring to deſcry
The morns approach, and greet her with his Song:
As lightly from his graſſy couch up roſe
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream,
Faſting he went to ſleep, and faſting wak'd.
Up to a hill anon his ſteps he rear'd,

From whoſe high top to ken the proſpect round,
If Cottage were in view, Sheep-cote or Herd;
But Cottage, Herd, or Sheep-cote none he ſaw,
Only in a bottom ſaw a pleaſant Grove,
With chaunt of tuneful Birds reſounding loud;
Thither he bent his way, determin'd there
To reſt at noon, and enter'd ſoon the ſhade
High rooft and walks beneath, and alleys brown
That open'd in the midſt a woody Scene,
Nature's own work it ſeem'd (Nature taught Art)
And to a Superſtitious eye the haunt
Of Wood-Gods and Wood-Nymphs; he view'd it round,
When ſuddenly a man before him ſtood,
Not ruſtic as before, but ſeemlier clad,
As one in City, or Court, or Palace bred,
And with fair ſpeech theſe words to him addreſs'd.

With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild ſolitude ſo long ſhould bide
Of all things deſtitute, and well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of ſome note,
As ſtory tells, have trod this Wilderneſs;
The fugitive Bond-woman with her Son
Out-caſt *Nebaioth*, yet found he relief
By a providing Angel; all the race
Of *Iſrael* here had famiſh'd, had not God
Rain'd from Heaven Manna, and that Prophet bold
Native of *Thebes* wandring here was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat,
Of thee theſe forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deſerted here indeed.

To whom thus Jeſus; what conclud'ſt thou hence?

They

They all had need, I as thou ſeeſt have none.

How haſt thou hunger then? Satan reply'd,
Tell me if Food were now before thee ſet,
Would'ſt thou not eat? Thereafter as I like
The giver, anſwer'd Jeſus. Why ſhould that
Cauſe thy refuſal, ſaid the ſubtle Fiend,
Haſt thou not right to all Created things,
Owe not all Creatures by juſt right to thee
Duty and ſervice, nor to ſtay till bid,
But tender all their power? nor mention I
Meats by the Law unclean, or offer'd firſt
To Idols, thoſe young *Daniel* could refuſe;
Nor proffer'd by an Enemy, though who
Would ſcruple that, with want oppreſt? Behold
Nature aſham'd, or better to expreſs,
Troubl'd that thou ſhould'ſt hunger, hath purvey'd
From all the Elements her choiceſt ſtore
To treat thee as beſeems, and as her Lord
With honour, only deign to ſit and eat.

He ſpake no dream, for as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld
In ample ſpace under the broadeſt ſhade
A Table richly ſpred, in Regal mode,
With diſhes pill'd, and meats of nobleſt ſort
And ſavour, Beaſts of chaſe, or Fowl of game,
In Paſtry-built, or from the ſpit, or boyl'd,
Gris-amber-ſteam'd; all Fiſh from Sea or Shore,
Freſhet, or purling Brook, of ſhell or fin,
And exquiſiteſt name, for which was drain'd
*Pontus* and *Lucrine* Bay, and *Afric* Coaſt.
Alas how ſimple, to theſe Cates compar'd,
Was that crude Apple that diverted *Eve!*

And at a ſtately ſide-board by the wine
That fragrant ſmell diffus'd, in order ſtood
Tall ſtripling youths rich clad, of fairer hew
Than *Ganymed* or *Hylas*, diſtant more
Under the Trees now trip'd, now ſolemn ſtood
Nymphs of *Diana*'s train, and *Naiades*
With fruits and flowers from *Amalthea*'s horn,
And Ladies of the *Heſperides*, that ſeem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd ſince
Of Fairy Damſels met in foreſt wide
By Knights of *Logres*, or of *Lyones*,
*Lancelot* or *Pelleas*, or *Pellenore*,
And all the while harmonious Airs were heard
Of chiming ſtrings, or charming pipes and winds
Of gentleſt gale *Arabian* odours fann'd
From their ſoft wings, and *Flora*'s earlieſt ſmells.
Such was the ſplendour, and the Tempter now
His invitation earneſtly renew'd.

What doubts the Son of God to ſit and eat?
Theſe are not fruits forbidden, no interdict
Defends the touching of theſe Viands pure,
Their taſte no knowledge works at leaſt of evil,
But life preſerves, deſtroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with ſweet reſtorative delight.
All theſe are Spirits of Air, and Woods, and Springs,
Thy gentle Miniſters, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord:
What doubt'ſt thou Son of God? ſit down and eat.

To whom thus Jeſus temperately reply'd:
Said'ſt thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my pow'r that right to uſe?

Shall

Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me beſt, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as ſoon as thou,
Command a Table in this Wilderneſs,
And call ſwift flights of Angels miniſtrant
Array'd in Glory on my cup to attend:
Why ſhouldſt thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find,
And with my hunger what haſt thou to do?
Thy pompous Delicacies I contemn,
And count thy ſpecious gifts no gifts but guiles.

To whom thus anſwer'd Satan malecontent:
That I have alſo power to give thou ſeeſt,
If of that pow'r I bring thee voluntary
What I might have beſtow'd on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place
Choſe to impart to thy apparent need,
Why ſhouldſt thou not accept it? but I ſee
What I can do or offer is ſuſpect;
Of theſe things others quickly will diſpoſe
Whoſe pains have earn'd the far fet ſpoil. With that
Both Table and Proviſion vaniſh't quite
With ſound of Harpies wings, and Talons heard;
Only the importune Tempter ſtill remain'd,
And with theſe words his Temptation purſu'd.

By hunger, that each other Creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not mov'd;
Thy temperance invincible beſides,
For no allurement yields to appetite,
And all thy heart is ſet on high deſigns,
High actions; but wherewith to be atchiev'd?
Great acts require great means of enterpriſe,

Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of Birth,
A Carpenter thy Father known, thy ſelf
Bred up in poverty and ſtreights at home;
Loſt in a Deſart here and hunger-bit:
Which way or from what hope doſt thou aſpire
To greatneſs? whence Authority deriv'ſt,
What Followers, what Retinue canſt thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy Multitude,
Longer than thou canſt feed them on thy coſt?
Money brings Honour, Friends, Conqueſt and Realms;
What rais'd *Antipater* the Edomite,
And his Son *Herod* plac'd on *Juda*'s Throne;
(Thy throne) but gold that got him puiſſant friends?
Therefore, if at great things thou would'ſt arrive,
Get Riches firſt, get Wealth, and Treaſure heap,
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me,
Riches are mine, Fortune is in my hand;
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
While Vertue, Valour, Wiſdom ſit in want.

To whom thus Jeſus patiently reply'd;
Yet Wealth without theſe three is impotent,
To gain dominion or to keep it gain'd.
Witneſs thoſe ancient Empires of the Earth,
In highth of all their flowing wealth diſſolv'd:
But men endu'd with theſe, have oft attain'd
In loweſt poverty to higheſt deeds;
*Gideon* and *Jephtha*, and the Shepherd lad,
Whoſe off-ſpring on the Throne of *Judah* ſat
So many Ages, and ſhall yet regain
That ſeat, and reign in *Iſrael* without end.
Among the Heathen, (for throughout the World
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of Memorial) canſt thou not remember

*Quintius*,

*Quintus, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?*
For I eſteem thoſe names of men ſo poor
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
Riches though offer'd from the hand of Kings.
And what in me ſeems wanting, but that I
May alſo in this poverty as ſoon
Accompliſh what they did, perhaps and more?
Extol not Riches then, the toyl of Fools,
The wiſe mans cumbrance, if not ſnare, more apt
To ſlacken Vertue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praiſe.
What if with like averſion I reject
Riches and Realms; yet not for that a Crown,
Golden in ſhew, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and ſleepleſs nights
To him who wears the Regal Diadem,
When on his ſhoulders each mans burden lies;
For therein ſtands the Office of a King,
His Honour, Vertue, Merit and chief Praiſe,
That for the Publick all this weight he bears.
Yet he who reigns within himſelf, and rules
Paſſions, Deſires, and Fears, is more a King;
Which every wiſe and vertuous man attains:
And who attains not, ill aſpires to rule
Cities of men, or head-ſtrong multitudes,
Subject himſelf to Anarchy within,
Or lawleſs Paſſions in him which he ſerves.
But to guide Nations in the way of truth
By ſaving Doctrine, and from errour lead
To know, and knowing worſhip God aright,
Is yet more Kingly, this attracts the Soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part,
That other o're the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind

So reigning can be no ſincere delight.
Beſides to give a Kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to aſſume.
Riches are needleſs then, both for themſelves,
And for thy reaſon why they ſhould be ſought,
To gain a Scepter, oftеſt better miſs'd.

*The End of the Second Book.*

PARADISE

# Paradiſe Regain'd.

## BOOK. III.

SO ſpake the Son of God, and Satan ſtood
A while as mute confounded what to ſay,
What to reply, confuted and convinc't
Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;
At length collecting all his Serpent wiles,
With ſoothing words renew'd, him thus accoſts.

I ſee thou know'ſt what is of uſe to know,
What beſt to ſay canſt ſay, to do canſt do;
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
Contains of good, wiſe, juſt, the perfect ſhape.
Should Kings and Nations from thy mouth conſult,
Thy Counſel would be as the Oracle
*Urim* and *Thummim*, thoſe oraculous gems
On *Aaron's* breaſt: or tongue of Seers old
Infallible; or wert thou ſought to deeds
That might require th' array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be ſuch, that all the world
Could not ſuſtain thy Proweſs, or ſubſiſt
In battel, though againſt thy few in arms.
Theſe God-like Vertues wherefore doſt thou hide?
Affecting private life, or more abſcure
In ſavage VVilderneſs, wherefore deprive
All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thy ſelf

The fame and glory, glory the reward
That ſole excites to high attempts the flame
Of moſt erected Spirits, moſt temper'd pure
Ætherial, who all pleaſures elſe deſpiſe,
All treaſures and all gain eſteem as droſs,
And dignities and powers all but the higheſt?
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe, the ſon
Of *Macedonian Philip* had e're theſe
Won *Aſia* and the Throne of *Cyrus* held
At his diſpoſe, young *Scipio* had brought down
The *Carthaginian* pride, young *Pompey* quell'd
The *Pontic* King and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirſt of glory, but augment.
Great *Julius*, whom now all the world admires
The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
With glory, wept that he had liv'd ſo long
Inglorious: But thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.
Thou neither doſt perſwade me to ſeek wealth
For Empire's ſake, nor Empire to affect
For glories ſake by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The peoples praiſe, if always praiſe unmixt?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miſcellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, ſcarce worth the praiſe,
They praiſe and they admire they know not what;
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by ſuch extoll'd,
To live upon their tongues and be their talk,
Of whom to be diſprais'd were no ſmall praiſe?
His lot who dares be ſingularly good.

Th'in-

Th'intelligent among them and the wiſe
Are few, and glory ſcarce of few is rais'd.
This is true glory and renown, when God
Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
The juſt man, and divulges him through Heaven
To all his Angels, who with true applauſe
Recount his praiſes; thus he did to *Job*,
When to extend his fame, through Heaven and Earth,
As thou to thy reproach mayſt well remember,
He ask'd thee, haſt thou ſeen my ſervant *Job*?
Famous he was in Heaven, on Earth leſs known;
Where glory is falſe glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
They err who count it glorious to ſubdue
By Conqueſt far and wide, to over-run
Large Countries, and in field great Battels win,
Great Cities by aſſault: what do theſe Worthies,
But rob and ſpoil, burn, ſlaughter, and enſlave
Peaceable Nations, neighbouring, or remote,
Made Captive, yet deſerving freedom more
Than thoſe their Conquerours, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin whereſoe're they rove,
And all the flouriſhing works of peace deſtroy,
Then ſwell with pride, and muſt be titl'd Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worſhip't with Temple, Prieſt and Sacrifice;
One is the Son of *Jove*, of *Mars* the other,
Till Conquerour Death diſcover them ſcarce men,
Rowling in brutiſh vices, and deform'd,
Violent or ſhameful death thir due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wiſdom eminent,

By patience, temperance; I mention ſtill
Him whom thy wrongs with Saintly patience born,
Made famous in a Land and times obſcure;
Who names not now with honour patient *Job?*
Poor *Socrates* (who next more memorable?)
By what he taught and ſuffer'd for ſo doing,
For truth's ſake ſuffering death unjuſt, lives now
Equal in fame to proudeſt Conquerours.
Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught ſuffer'd; if young *African* for fame
His waſted Country freed from *Punic* rage,
The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at leaſt,
And loſes, though but verbal, his reward.
Shall I ſeek glory then, as vain men ſeek
Oft not deſerv'd? I ſeek not mine, but his
Who ſent me, and thereby witneſs whence I am.

To whom the Tempter murmuring thus reply'd.
Think not ſo ſlight of glory; therein leaſt
Reſembling thy great Father: he ſeeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and Governs, nor content in Heaven
By all his Angels glorifi'd, requires
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
Wiſe or unwiſe, no difference, no exemption;
Above all Sacrifice, or hallow'd gift
Glory he requires, and glory he receives
Promiſcuous from all Nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or Barbarous, nor exception hath declar'd;
From us his foes pronounc't glory he exacts.

To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd.
And reaſon; ſince his word all things produc'd,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,

But

But to ſhew forth his goodneſs and impart
His good communicable to every ſoul
Freely; of whom what could he leſs expect
Than glory and benediction, that is thanks,
The ſlighteſt, eaſieſt, readieſt recompence
From them who could return him nothing elſe,
And not returning what would likelieſt render
Contempt inſtead, diſhonour obloquy?
Hard recompence, unſutable return
For ſo much good, ſo much beneficence.
But why ſhould man ſeek glory? who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy, and ſhame?
Who for ſo many benefits receiv'd
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and falſe,
And ſo of all true good himſelf deſpoil'd,
Yet, ſacrilegious, to himſelf would take
That which to God alone of right belongs;
Yet ſo much bounty is in God, ſuch grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himſelf to glory will advance.

So ſpake the Son of God; and here again
Satan had not to anſwer, but ſtood ſtruck
With guilt of his own ſin, for he himſelf
Inſatiable of glory had loſt all,
Yet of another Plea bethought him ſoon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, ſaid he, ſo deem,
Worth or not worth their ſeeking, let it paſs:
But to a Kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To ſit upon thy Father *David*'s Throne;
By Mothers ſide thy Father, though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part

Eaſily

Eaſily from poſſeſſion won with arms;
*Judæa* now and all the promis'd land
Reduc't a Province under *Roman* yoke,
Obeys *Tiberius*; nor is always rul'd
With temperate ſway; oft have they violated
The Temple, oft the Law with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
*Antiochus*: and think'ſt thou to regain
Thy right by ſitting ſtill or thus retiring?
So did not *Machabeus*: he indeed
Retir'd unto the Deſart, but with arms;
And o're a mighty King ſo oft prevail'd
That by ſtrong hand his Family obtain'd,
Though Prieſts, the Crown, and *David's* Throne uſurp'd,
With *Modin* and her Suburbs once content.
If Kingdom move thee not, let move thee Zeal,
And duty; Zeal and duty are not ſlow;
But on Occaſions forelock watchful wait.
They themſelves rather are occaſion beſt,
Zeal of thy Father's houſe, Duty to free
Thy Country from her Heathen ſervitude;
So ſhalt thou beſt fulfill, beſt verifie
The Prophets old, who ſung thy endleſs raign,
The happier raign the ſooner it begins,
Raign then; what can'ſt thou better do the while?

To whom our Saviour anſwer thus return'd.
All things are beſt fulfill'd in their due time,
And time there is for all things, Truth hath ſaid:
If of my raign prophetic Writ hath told,
That it ſhall never end, ſo when begin
The Father in his purpoſe hath decreed,
He in whoſe hand all times and ſeaſons roul.
What if he hath decreed that I ſhall firſt

Be

Be try'd in humble ſtate, and things adverſe,
By tribulations, injuries, inſults,
Contempts, and ſcorns, and ſnares, and violence,
Suffering, abſtaining, quietly expecting.
Without diſtruſt or doubt, that he may know
What I can ſuffer, how obey? who beſt
Can ſuffer, beſt can do; beſt reign, who firſt
Well hath obey'd; juſt tryal e're I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlaſting Kingdom, why art thou
Solicitous, what moves thy inquiſition?
Know'ſt thou not that my riſing is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy deſtruction?

To whom the Tempter inly rackt reply'd.
Let that come when it comes; all hope is loſt
Of my reception into grace; what worſe?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear;
If there be worſe, the expectation more
Of worſe torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worſt; worſt is my Port,
My harbour and my ultimate repoſe,
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever for it ſelf condemn'd,
And will alike be puniſh'd; whether thou
Raign or raign not; though to that gentle brow
Willingly I could flie, and hope thy raign,
From that placid aſpect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil ſtate,
Would ſtand between me and thy Father's ire,
(Whoſe ire I dread more than the fire of Hell.)
A ſhelter and a kind of ſhading cool

Interpoſition, as a ſummers cloud.
If I then to the worſt that can be haſt,
Why move thy feet ſo ſlow to what is beſt,
Happieſt both to thy ſelf and all the world,
That thou who worthieſt art ſhould'ſt be their King?
Perhaps thou lingreſt in deep thoughts detain'd
Of the enterprize ſo hazardous and high;
No wonder, for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or humane nature can receive, conſider
Thy life hath yet been private, moſt part ſpent
At home, ſcarce view'd the *Gallilean* Towns,
At once a year *Jeruſalem*, few days
Short ſojourn; and what thence could'ſt thou obſerve?
The world thou haſt not ſeen, much leſs her glory,
Empires, and Monarchs, and their radiant Courts,
Beſt ſchool of beſt experience, quickeſt in ſight
In all things that to greateſt Actions lead.
The wiſeſt, unexperienc't, will be ever
Timorous and loth, with novice modeſty,
(As he who ſeeking Aſſes found a Kingdom)
Irreſolute, unhardy, unadventrous:
But I will bring thee where thou ſoon ſhalt quit
Thoſe rudiments, and ſee before thine eyes
The Monarchies of the Earth, their pomp and ſtate,
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thy ſelf ſo apt, in regal Arts,
And regal Myſteries; that thou may'ſt know
How beſt their oppoſition to withſtand.

With that (ſuch power was giv'n him then) he took
The Son of God up to a Mountain high.
It was a Mountain at whoſe verdant feet
A ſpacious plain out-ſtretch'd in circuit wide

Lay

Lay pleaſant; from his ſide two rivers flow'd,
Th' one winding, the other ſtreight and left between
Fair Champain with leſs rivers intervein'd,
Then meeting join'd their tribute to the Sea,
Fertil of corn the glebe, of oyl and wine,
With herds the paſtures throng'd, with flocks the hills,
Huge Cities and high towr'd, that well might ſeem
The ſeats of mightieſt Monarchs, and ſo large
The Proſpect was, that here and there was room
For barren deſart fountainleſs and dry.
To this high mountain top the Tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we ſpeeded, and o're hill and dale,
Foreſt and field, and flood, Temples and Towers
Cut ſhorter many a league; here thou behold'ſt
*Aſſyria* and her Empire's ancient bounds,
*Araxes* and the *Caſpian* lake, thence on
As far as *Indus* Eaſt, *Euphrates* Weſt,
And oft beyond; to South the *Perſian* Bay,
And inacceſſible the *Arabian* drouth:
Here *Ninevee*, of length within her wall
Several days journey, built by *Ninus* old,
Of that firſt golden Monarchy the ſeat,
And ſeat of *Salmanaſſar*, whoſe ſucceſs
*Iſrael* in long captivity ſtill mourns;
There *Babylon* the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
*Judah* and all thy Father *David*'s houſe
Led captive, and *Jeruſalem* laid waſte,
Till *Cyrus* ſet them free; *Perſepolis*
His City there thou ſeeſt, and *Bactra* there;
*Ecbatana* her ſtructure vaſt there ſhews,
And *Hecatompylos* her hundred gates,

There *Suſa* by *Choaſpes*, amber ſtream,
The drink of none but Kings; of later fame
Built by *Emathian*, or by *Parthian* hands,
The great *Seleucia*, *Nicibis*, and there
*Artaxata*, *Teredon*, *Teſiphon*,
Turning with eaſie eye thou may'ſt behold.
All theſe the *Parthian*, now ſome Ages paſt,
By great *Arſaces* led, who founded firſt
That Empire, under his dominion holds
From the luxurious Kings of *Antioch* won.
And juſt in time thou com'ſt to have a view
Of his great power; for now the *Parthian* King
In *Cteſiphon* hath gather'd all his Hoſt
Againſt the *Scythian*, whoſe incurſions wild
Have waſted *Sogdiana*; to her aid
He marches now in haſte; ſee, though from far,
His thouſands, in what Martial equipage
They iſſue forth, Steel Bows, and ſhafts their arms
Of equal dread in flight, or in purſuit;
All Horſemen, in which fight they moſt excell;
See how in warlike Muſter they appear,
In Rhombs and wedges, and half-moons and wings.

He look't and ſaw what numbers numberleſs
The city gates out-pour'd, light armed Troops
In coats of Mail and Military pride;
In Mail their horſes clad, yet fleet and ſtrong,
Prauncing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many Provinces from bound to bound;
From *Arachoſia*, from *Gandaor* Eaſt,
And *Margiana* to the *Hircanian* cliffs
Of *Caucaſus*, and dark *Iberian* dales,
From *Atropatia* and the neighbouring plains
Of *Adiabene*, *Media*, and the South

Of

Of *Suſiana*, to *Balſara*'s hav'n.
He ſaw them in their forms of battel rang'd,
How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them ſhot
Sharp ſleet of arrowy ſhower againſt the face
Of their purſuers, and overcame by flight;
The field all iron caſt a gleaming brown,
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn,
Cuiraſſiers all in ſteel for ſtanding fight;
Chariots or Elephants endorſt with Towers
Of Archers, nor of labouring Pioneers
A multitude with Spades and Axes arm'd
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raiſe hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
Mules after theſe, Camels and Dromedaries,
And Waggons fraught with Utenſils of war.
Such forces met not, nor ſo wide a Camp,
When *Agrican* with all his Northern powers
Beſieg'd *Albracca*, as Romances tell;
The City of *Gallaphrone*, from thence to win
The faireſt of her Sex *Angelica*
His daughter, ſought by many Proweſt Knights,
Both *Paynim*, and the Peers of *Charlemane*.
Such and ſo numerous was their Chivalry;
At ſight whereof the Fiend yet more preſum'd,
And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

That thou may'ſt know I ſeek not to engage
Thy vertue, and not every way ſecure
On no ſlight grounds thy ſafety; hear, and mark
To what end I have brought thee hither and ſhewn
All this fair ſight; thy Kingdom though foretold
By Prophet or by Angel, unleſs thou
Endeavour, as thy Father *David* did,

Thou never ſhalt obtain; prediction ſtill
In all things, and all men, ſuppoſes means,
Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.
But ſay thou wert poſſeſs'd of *David*'s Throne
By free conſent of all, none oppoſite,
*Samaritan* or *Jew*; how could'ſt thou hope
Long to enjoy it quiet and ſecure,
Between two ſuch encloſing enemies
*Roman* and *Parthian?* therefore one of theſe
Thou muſt make ſure thy own, the *Parthian* firſt
By my advice, as nearer and of late
Found able by invaſion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her Kings
*Antigonus*, and old *Hyrcanus* bound,
Maugre the *Roman*: it ſhall be my task
To render thee the *Parthian* at diſpoſe;
Chuſe which thou wilt by conqueſt or by league.
By him thou ſhalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinſtall thee
In *David*'s royal Seat, his true Succeſſor,
Deliverance of thy brethren, thoſe ten Tribes
Whoſe off-ſpring in his Territory yet ſerve
In *Habor*, and among the *Medes* diſpers't
Ten Sons of *Jacob*, two of *Joſeph* loſt
Thus long from *Iſrael*; ſerving as of old
Their Fathers in the land of *Egypt* ſerv'd,
This offer ſets before thee to deliver.
Theſe if from ſervitude thou ſhalt reſtore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the Throne of *David* in full glory,
From *Egypt* to *Euphrates* and beyond
Shalt raign, and *Rome* or *Cæſar* not need fear.

To whom our Saviour anſwer'd thus unmov'd.

Much

Much oſtentation vain of fleſhly arm,
And fragile arms, much inſtrument of war
Long in preparing, ſoon to nothing brought,
Before mine Eyes thou haſt ſet; and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battels and leagues,
Plauſible to the VVorld, to me worth naught.
Means I muſt uſe thou ſay'ſt, prediction elſe
VVill unpredict and fail me of the Throne:
My time I told thee, (and that time for thee
VVere better fartheſt off) is not yet come;
When that comes think not thou to find me ſlack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politick maxims, or that cumberſome
Luggage of War there ſhewn me, argument
Of human weakneſs rather than of ſtrength.
My Brethren, as thou call'ſt them; thoſe ten Tribes
I muſt deliver, if I mean to raign
*David*'s true heir, and his full Scepter ſway
To juſt extent over all *Iſrael*'s Sons;
But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
For *Iſrael*, or for *David*, or his Throne,
When thou ſtood'ſt up his Tempter to the pride
Of numbring *Iſrael*, which coſt the lives
Of threeſcore and ten thouſand *Iſraelites*
By three days Peſtilence? ſuch was thy zeal
To *Iſrael* then, the ſame that now to me.
As for thoſe captive Tribes, themſelves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worſhip Calves, the Deities
Of *Egypt*, *Baal* next and *Aſhtaroth*,
And all the Idolatries of Heathen round,
Beſides their other worſe than heatheniſh crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity

Hum-

Humbled themſelves or penitent beſought
The God of their Fore-fathers; but ſo dy'd
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themſelves, diſtinguiſhable ſcarce
From Gentils, but by Circumciſion vain,
And God with Idols in their worſhip join'd.
Should I of theſe the liberty regard,
Who freed, as to their ancient Patrimony,
Unhumbl'd, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow; and to their Gods perhaps
Of *Bethel* and of *Dan*? no, let them ſerve
Their enemies, who ſerve Idols with God.
Yet he at length, time to himſelf beſt known,
Remembring *Abraham*, by ſome wond'rous call
May bring them back repentant and ſincere,
And at their paſſing cleave the *Aſſyrian* flood,
While to their native land with joy they haſte,
As the Red Sea and *Jordan* once he cleft,
When to the promis'd land their Fathers paſs'd;
To his due time and providence I leave them.

So ſpake *Iſrael*'s true King, and to the Fiend
Made anſwer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falſhood contends.

*The End of the Third Book.*

PARADISE

# Paradiſe Regain'd.

## BOOK. IV.

PErplex'd and troubl'd at his bad ſucceſs
The Tempter ſtood, nor had what to reply,
Diſcover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope,
So oft, and the perſuaſive Rhetoric
That ſleek't his tongue, and won ſo much on *Eve*,
So little here, nay loſt; but *Eve* was *Eve*,
This far his over-match, who ſelf deceiv'd
And raſh, before-hand had no better weigh'd
The ſtrength he was to cope with, or his own:
But as a man who had been matchleſs held
In cunning, over-reach't where leaſt he thought,
To ſave his credit, and for very ſpight
Still will be tempting him who foyls him ſtill,
And never ceaſe, though to his ſhame the more;
Or as a ſwarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-preſs where ſweet mouſt is powr'd,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming ſound;
Or ſurging waves againſt a ſolid rock,
Though all to ſhivers daſh't, the aſſault renew,
Vain battry, and in froth or bubbles end;
So Satan, whom repulſe upon repulſe
Met ever; and to ſhameful ſilence brought,
Yet gives not o're though deſperate of ſucceſs,
And his vain importunity purſues.
He brought our Saviour to the Weſtern ſide

Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long but in bredth not wide,
Waſh'd by the Southern Sea, and on the North
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills
That ſcreen'd the fruits of th'earth and ſeats of men
From cold *Septentrion* blaſts, thence in the midſt
Divided by a river, of whoſe banks
On each ſide an Imperial City ſtood,
With Towers and Temples proudly elevate
On ſeven ſmall Hills, with Palaces adorn'd,
Porches and Theatres, Baths, Aqueducts,
Statues and Trophies, and Triumphal Arcs,
Gardens and Groves preſented to his eyes,
Above the height of Mountains interpos'd.
By what ſtrange Parallax or Optick skill
Of viſion multiplied through Air, or Glaſs
Of Teleſcope, were curious to enquire:
And now the Tempter thus his ſilence broke.

The City which thou ſeeſt no other deem
Than great and glorious *Rome*, Queen of the Earth
So far renown'd, and with the ſpoils enricht
Of Nations; there the Capitol thou ſeeſt
Above the reſt lifting his ſtately head
On the *Tarpeian* rock, her Cittadel
Impregnable, and there Mount *Palatine*
The Imperial Palace, compaſs huge, and high
The Structure, skill of nobleſt Architects,
With gilded battlements, conſpicuous far,
Turrets and Terraſes, and glittering Spires.
Many a fair Edifice beſides, more like
Houſes of Gods (ſo well I have diſpos'd
My Aery Microſcope) thou may'ſt behold
Outſide and inſide both, pillars and roofs

Carv'd

Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd Artificers
In Cedar, Marble, Ivory or Gold.
Thence to the Gates caſt round thine eye, and ſee
What conflux iſſuing forth, or entring in,
Pretors, Proconſuls to their Provinces
Haſting or on return, in robes of State;
Lictors and rods the enſigns of their power,
Legions and Cohorts, turmes of horſe and wings:
Or Embaſſies from Regions far remote
In various habits on the *Appian* road,
Or on the *Emilian*, ſome from fartheſt South,
*Syene*, and where the ſhadow both way falls,
*Meroe Nilotic* Iſle, and more to Weſt,
The Realm of *Bocchus* to the Black-moor Sea;
From the *Aſian* Kings and *Parthian* among theſe,
From *India* and the golden *Cherſoneſs*,
And utmoſt *Indian* Iſle *Taprobane*,
Dusk faces with white ſilken Turbants wreath'd:
From *Gallia*, *Gades*, and the *Britiſh* Weſt,
*Germans* and *Scythians*, and *Sarmatians* North
Beyond *Danubius* to the *Tauric* Pool.
All Nations now to *Rome* obedience pay,
To *Rome's* great Emperour, whoſe wide domain
In ample Territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, Arts, and Arms,
And long Renown thou juſtly may'ſt prefer
Before the *Parthian*; theſe two Thrones except,
The reſt are barbarous, and ſcarce worth the ſight,
Shar'd among petty Kings too far remov'd;
Theſe having ſhewn thee, I have ſhewn thee all
The kingdoms of the VVorld, and all their glory.
This Emperour hath no Son, and now is old,
Old and laſcivious, and from *Rome* retir'd
To *Capreæ* an Iſland ſmall but ſtrong

On the *Campanian* ſhore, with purpoſe there
His horrid luſts in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked Favourite
All publick cares, and yet of him ſuſpicious,
Hated of all, and hating; with what eaſe
Indu'd with Regal Vertues as thou art,
Appearing and beginning noble deeds,
Might'ſt thou expel this monſter from his Throne
Now made a ſtye, and in his place aſcending
A victor, people free from ſervile yoke?
And with my help thou may'ſt; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim therefore at no leſs than all the world,
Aim at the higheſt, without the higheſt attain'd
Will be for thee no ſitting, or not long
On *David*'s Throne, he propheſi'd what will.

To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.
Nor doth this grandeur and majeſtick ſhow
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More than of Arms before, allure mine eye,
Much leſs my mind; though thou ſhould'ſt add to tell
Their ſumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feaſts
On *Cittron* tables or *Atlantic* ſtone,
(For I have alſo heard, perhaps have read)
Their wines of *Setia*, *Cales*, and *Falerne*,
*Chios* and *Creet*, and how they quaff in Gold,
Cryſtal and Myrrhine cups imboſs'd with Gems
And ſtuds of Pearl, to me ſhould'ſt tell who thirſt
And hunger ſtill: then Embaſſies thou ſhew'ſt
From Nations far and nigh; what honour that,
But tedious waſte of time to ſit and hear
So many hollow complements and lies,
Outlandiſh flatteries? then proceed'ſt to talk

Of

Of the Emperour, how eaſily ſubdu'd,
How glorioufly; I ſhall, thou ſay'ſt, expell
A brutiſh monſter: what if I withall
Expell a Devil who firſt made him ſuch?
Let his tormenter Conſcience find him out,
For him I was not ſent, nor yet to free
That People victor once, now vile and baſe,
Deſervedly made vaſſal, who once juſt,
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,
But govern ill the Nations under yoke,
Peeling their Provinces, exhauſted all
By luſt and rapine; firſt ambitious grown
Of triumph that inſulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their ſports to blood enur'd
Of fighting beaſts, and men to beaſts expos'd,
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier ſtill,
And from the daily Scene effeminate.
What wiſe and valiant Man would ſeek to free
Theſe thus degenerate, by themſelves enſlav'd,
Or could of inward ſlaves make outward free?
Know therefore when my ſeaſon comes to ſit
On *David*'s Throne, it ſhall be like a tree,
Spreading and overſhadowing all the Earth,
Or as a ſtone that ſhall to pieces daſh
All Monarchies beſides throughout the World,
And of my Kingdom there ſhall be no end:
Means there ſhall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

To whom the Tempter impudent repli'd.
I ſee all offers made by me how ſlight
Thou valu'ſt, becauſe offer'd, and reject'ſt:
Nothing will pleaſe the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than ſtill to contradict:

On the other ſide know alſo thou, that I
On what I offer ſet as high eſteem,
Nor what I part with mean to give for naught;
All theſe which in a moment, thou behold'ſt,
The Kingdoms of the World to thee I give;
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I pleaſe,
No trifle; yet with this reſerve, not elſe,
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worſhip me as thy ſuperior Lord,
Eaſily done, and hold them all of me;
For what can leſs ſo great a gift deſerve?

Whom thus our Saviour anſwer'd with diſdain,
I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers leſs,
Now both abhor, ſince thou haſt dar'd to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition;
But I endure the time, till which expir'd,
Thou haſt permiſſion on me. It is written
The firſt of all Commandments, Thou ſhalt worſhip
The Lord thy God, and only him ſhalt ſerve;
And dar'ſt thou to the Son of God propound
To worſhip thee accurſt, now more accurſt
For this attempt bolder than that on *Eve*,
And more blaſphemous? which expect to rue.
The Kingdoms of the World to thee were giv'n,
Permitted rather, and by thee uſurp't,
Other donation none thou canſt produce:
If given, by whom but by the King of Kings,
God over all Supreme? if given to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid? But gratitude in thee is loſt
Long ſince. Wert thou ſo void of fear or ſhame,
As offer them to me the Son of God,
To me my own, on ſuch abhorred pact,

That

That I fall down and worſhip thee as God?
Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'ſt
That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd.

To whom the Fiend with fear abaſht reply'd.
Be not ſo ſore offended, Son of God;
Though Sons of God both Angels are and Men,
If I to try whether in higher ſort
Than theſe thou bear'ſt that title, have propos'd
What both from men and Angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth
Nations beſides from all the quarter'd winds,
God of this world invok't and world beneath;
Who then thou art whoſe coming is foretold
To me ſo fatal, me it moſt concerns.
The tryal hath indamag'd thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more eſteem;
Me naught advantag'd, miſſing what I aim'd.
Therefore let paſs, as they are tranſitory,
The Kingdoms of this world; I ſhall no more
Adviſe thee, gain them as thou canſt, or not.
And thou thy ſelf ſeem'ſt otherwiſe inclin'd
Then to a worldly Crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound diſpute,
As by that early action may be judg'd,
When ſlipping from thy Mothers eye thou went'ſt
Alone into the Temple; there was found
Among the graveſt Rabbies diſputant
On points and queſtions fitting *Moſes* Chair,
Teaching not taught; the childhood ſhews the man,
As morning ſhews the day. Be famous then
By wiſdom; as thy Empire muſt extend,
So let extend thy mind o're all the world,
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend,

All

All knowledge is not couch't in *Moſes* Law,
The *Pentateuch* or what the Prophets wrote,
The *Gentiles* alſo know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Natures light;
And with the *Gentiles* much thou muſt converſe,
Ruling them by perſuaſion as thou mean'ſt,
Without their learning how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee hold converſation meet?
How wilt thou reaſon with them, how refute
Their Idoliſms, Traditions, Paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is beſt evinc't.
Look once more e're we leave this ſpecular Mount
Weſtward, much nearer by Southweſt, behold
Whereon the *Ægean* ſhore a City ſtands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the ſoil,
*Athens* the eye of *Greece*, Mother of Arts
And Eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hoſpitable, in her ſweet receſs,
City or Suburban, ſtudious walks and ſhades;
See there the Olive Grove of *Academe*,
*Plato*'s retirement, where the *Attic* Bird
Trills her thick-warbl'd notes the ſummer long,
There flowry hill *Hymettus* with the ſound
Of Bees induſtrious murmur oft invites
To ſtudious muſing; there *Iliſſus* rouls
His whiſpering ſtream; within the walls then view
The Schools of ancient Sages; his who bred
Great *Alexander* to ſubdue the World,
*Lyceum* there, and painted *Stoa* next:
There thou ſhalt hear and learn the ſecret power
Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-meaſur'd verſe,
*Æolian* charms and *Dorian Lyric* Odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher ſung,

Blind

Blind *Meleſigenes* thence *Homer* call'd,
Whoſe Poem *Phœbus* challeng'd for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave Tragœdians taught
In *Chorus* or *Iambic*, teachers beſt
Of moral prudence, with delight receiv'd
In brief ſententious precepts while they treat
Of fate and chance, and change in human life;
High actions, and high paſſions beſt deſcribing:
Thence to the famous Orators repair,
Thoſe ancient, whoſe reſiſtleſs eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce Democratie,
Shook the Arſenal and fulmin'd over *Greece*,
To *Macedon*, and *Artaxerxes* Throne;
To ſage Philoſophy next lend thine ear,
From Heaven deſcended to the low-rooft houſe
Of *Socrates*, ſee there his Tenement,
Whom well inſpir'd the Oracle pronounc'd
Wiſeſt of men; from whoſe mouth iſſu'd forth
Mellifluous ſtreams that water'd all the Schools
Of Academics old and new, with thoſe
Sirnam'd *Peripateticks*, and the Sect
*Epicurean*, and the *Stoic* ſevere;
Theſe here revolve, or, as thou lik'ſt, at home,
Till time mature thee to a Kingdom's weight;
Theſe rules will render thee a King compleat
Within thy ſelf, much more with Empire joyn'd.

To whom our Saviour ſagely thus reply'd.
Think not, but that I know theſe things, or think
I know them not; not therefore am I ſhort
Of knowing what I aught; he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But theſe are falſe, or little elſe but dreams,

Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The firſt and wiſeſt of them all profeſs'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew;
The next to fabling fell and ſmooth conceits,
A third ſort doubted all things, though plain ſence;
Others in vertue plac'd felicity,
But vertue joyn'd with riches and long life,
In corporal pleaſure he, and careleſs eaſe,
The Stoic laſt in Philoſophic pride,
By him call'd vertue; and his vertuous man,
Wiſe, perfect in himſelf, and all poſſeſſing
Equal to God, oft ſhames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleaſure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which when he liſts, he leaves, or boaſts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boaſt,
Or ſubtle ſhifts conviction to evade.
Alas what can they teach, and not miſlead;
Ignorant of themſelves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himſelf, on grace depending?
Much of the Soul they talk, but all awrie,
And in themſelves ſeek vertue, and to themſelves
All glory arrogate, to God give none,
Rather accuſe him under uſual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardleſs quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore ſeeks in theſe
True wiſdom, finds her not, or by deluſion
Far worſe, her falſe reſemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However many books
Wiſe men have ſaid are weariſom; who reads
Inceſſantly, and to his reading brings not
A ſpirit and judgment equal or ſuperior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elſewhere ſeek)

Uncertain

Uncertain and unſettl'd ſtill remains,
Deep verſt in books and ſhallow in himſelf,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a ſpunge;
As Children gathering pibles on the ſhore.
Or if I would delight my private hours
With Muſic or with Poem, where ſo ſoon
As in our native Language can I find
That ſolace? All our Law and Story ſtrew'd
With Hymns, our Pſalms with artful terms inſcrib'd,
Our Hebrew Songs and Harps in *Babylon*,
That pleas'd ſo well our Victors ear, declare
That rather *Greece* from us theſe arts deriv'd;
Ill imitated, while they loudeſt ſing
The vices of their Deities, and their own
In Fable, Hymn, or Song, ſo perſonating
Their Gods ridiculous, and themſelves paſt ſhame.
Remove their ſwelling Epithetes thick laid
As varniſh on a Harlots cheek, the reſt,
Thin ſown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With *Sion's* ſongs, to all true taſts excelling,
Where God is prais'd aright, and God-like men,
The Holieſt of Holies, and his Saints;
Such are from God inſpir'd, not ſuch from thee;
Unleſs where moral vertue is expres't
By light of Nature not in all quite loſt.
Their Orators thou then extoll'ſt, as thoſe
The top of Eloquence, Statiſts indeed,
And lovers of their Country, as may ſeem;
But herein to our Prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The ſolid rules of Civil Government
In their Majeſtic unaffected ſtile

Then

Then all the Oratory of *Greece* and *Rome.*
In them is plaineſt taught, and eaſieſt learnt,
What makes a Nation happy, and keeps it ſo,
What ruins Kingdoms, and lays Cities flat;
Theſe only with our Law beſt form a King.

So ſpake the Son of God; but Satan now
Quite at a loſs, for all his darts were ſpent,
Thus to our Saviour with ſtern brow repli'd.

Since neither wealth, nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom nor Empire pleaſes thee, nor aught
By me propos'd in life contemplative,
Or active, tended on by glory, or fame,
What doſt thou in this World? the Wilderneſs
For thee is fitteſt place, I found thee there,
And thither will return thee, yet remember
What I foretell thee, ſoon thou ſhalt have cauſe
To wiſh thou never hadſt rejected thus
Nicely or cautiouſly my offer'd aid,
Which would have ſet thee in ſhort time with eaſe
On *David's* Throne; or Throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulneſs of time, thy ſeaſon,
When Propheſies of thee are beſt fulfill'd.
Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
Or Heav'n write aught of Fate, by what the Stars
Voluminous, or ſingle Characters,
In their conjunction met, give me to ſpell,
Sorrows, and labours oppoſition, hate,
Attends thee, ſcorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and ſtripes, and laſtly cruel death,
A Kingdom they portend thee, but what Kingdom,
Real or Allegoric I diſcern not,
Nor when, eternal ſure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefixt.

Directs

Directs me in the Starry Rubric ſet.

So ſaying he took (for ſtill he knew his Power
Not yet expir'd) and to the Wilderneſs
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to diſappear. Darkneſs now roſe,
As day-light ſunk, and brought in lowring night
Her ſhadowy off-ſpring unſubſtantial both,
Privation meer of light and abſent day.
Our Saviour meek and with untroubl'd mind
After his aery jaunt, though hurried ſore,
Hungry and cold betook him to his reſt,
Wherever, under ſome concourſe of ſhades
Whoſe branching arms thick intertwind might ſhield
From dews and damps of night his ſhelter'd head,
But ſhelter'd ſlept in vain, for at his head
The Tempter watch'd, and ſoon with ugly dreams
Diſturb'd his ſleep; and either Tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n the Clouds
From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mixt, water with fire
In ruine reconcil'd: nor ſlept the winds
Within their ſtony caves, but ruſh'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vext Wilderneſs whoſe talleſt Pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and ſturdieſt Oaks
Bow'd their Stiff-necks, loaden with ſtormy blaſts,
Or torn up ſheer: ill waſt thou ſhrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only ſtoodſt
Unſhaken, nor yet ſtaid the terror there,
Infernal Ghoſts, and Helliſh Furies, round
Environ'd thee, ſome howl'd, ſome yell'd, ſome ſhriek'd,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'ſt unappall'd in calm and ſinleſs peace.

Thus paſs'd the night ſo foul till morning fair
Came forth with Pilgrim ſteps in amice gray;
VVho with her radiant finger ſtill'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
And griſly Spectres which the Fiend had rais'd
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the Sun with more effectual beams,
Had chear'd the face of Earth, and dri'd the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds
Who all things now behold more freſh and green,
After a night of ſtorm ſo ruinous,
Clear'd up their choiceſt notes in buſh and ſpray
To gratulate the ſweet return of morn;
Nor yet amidſt this joy and brighteſt morn
Was abſent, after all his miſchief done,
The Prince of darkneſs, glad would alſo ſeem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,
Yet with no new device, they all were ſpent,
Rather by this his laſt affront reſolv'd,
Deſperate of better courſe, to vent his rage,
And mad deſpight to be ſo oft repell'd.
Him walking on a Sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the North and VVeſt by a thick wood,
Out of the wood he ſtarts in wonted ſhape;
And in a careleſs mood thus to him ſaid.

Fair morning yet betides thee Son of God,
After a diſmal night; I heard the rack
As Earth and Sky would mingle; but my ſelf
VVas diſtant; and theſe flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillard frame of Heaven,
Or to the Earths dark baſis underneath,
Are to the main as inconſiderable,
And harmleſs, if not wholſom, as a ſneeze

To

To mans leſs univerſe, and ſoon are gone;
Yet as being oft times noxious where they light
On man, beaſt, plant, waſtful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whoſe heads they rore, and ſeem to point,
They oft fore-ſignifie and threaten ill:
This Tempeſt at this Deſert moſt was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'ſt.
Did I not tell thee, if thou did'ſt reject
The perfect ſeaſon offer'd with my aid
To win thy deſtin'd ſeat, but wilt prolong
All to the puſh of Fate, purſue thy way
Of gaining *David*'s Throne no man knows when,
For both the when and how is no where told,
Thou ſhalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
For Angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
The time and means: each act is rightlieſt done,
Not when it muſt, but when it may be beſt.
If thou obſerve not this, be ſure to find,
What I foretold thee, many a hard aſſay
Of dangers, and adverſities and pains,
E're thou of *Iſraels* Scepter get faſt hold;
Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies
May warn thee, as a ſure fore-going ſign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
And ſtaid not, but in brief him anſwer'd thus.

Me worſe than wet thou find'ſt not; other harm
Thoſe terrors which thou ſpeak'ſt of, did me none;
I never fear'd they could, though noiſing loud
And threatning nigh, what they can do as ſigns
Betok'ning, or ill boding, I contemn

As

As falſe portents, not ſent from God, but thee;
Who knowing I ſhall raign paſt thy preventing,
Obtrud'ſt thy offer'd aid, that I accepting
At leaſt might ſeem to hold all pow'r of thee,
Ambitious ſpirit, and wouldſt be thought my God,
And ſtorm'ſt refus'd, thinking to terrifie
Me to thy will; deſiſt, thou art diſcern'd
And toil'ſt in vain, nor me in vain moleſt.

To whom the Fiend now ſwoln with rage reply'd:
Then hear, O Son of *David*, Virgin-born;
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt,
Of the Meſſiah I have heard foretold
By all the Prophets; of thy birth at length
Announc't by *Gabriel* with the firſt I knew,
And of the Angelic Song in *Bethlehem* field,
On thy birth night, that ſung thee Saviour born,
From that time ſeldom have I ceas'd to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood laſt, though yet in private bred;
Till at the Ford of *Jordan* whither all
Flock'd to the Baptiſt, I among the reſt,
Though not to be Baptiz'd, by voice from Heav'n
Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower Scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God, which bears no ſingle ſenſe;
The Son of God I alſo am, or was,
And if I was, I am; relation ſtands;
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought
In ſome reſpect far higher ſo declar'd.
Therefore I watch'd thy footſteps from that hour,
And follow'd thee ſtill on to this waſt wild;

Where

Where by all beſt conjectures I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
Good reaſon then, if I before-hand ſeek
To underſtand my Adverſary, who
And what he is; his wiſdom, power, intent,
By parl, or compoſition, truce, or league
To win him, or win from him what I can.
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, ſift thee, and confeſs have found thee
Proof againſt all temptation as a rock
Of Adamant, and as a Center, firm
To the utmoſt of meer man both wiſe and good,
Not more; for Honours, Riches, Kingdoms, Glory
Have been before contemn'd, and may agen:
Therefore to know what more thou art than man,
Worth naming Son of God by voice from Heav'n,
Another method I muſt now begin.

So ſaying he caught him up, and without wing
Of *Hippogrif* bore through the Air ſublime
Over the Wilderneſs and o're the Plain;
Till underneath them fair *Jeruſalem*,
The holy City lifted high her Towers,
And higher yet the glorious Temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a Mount
Of Alabaſter, top't with Golden Spires:
There on the higheſt Pinnacle he ſet
The Son of God; and added thus in ſcorn:

There ſtand, if thou wilt ſtand; to ſtand upright
Till ask thee skill; I to thy Fathers houſe
Have brought thee, and higheſt plac't, higheſt is beſt,
Now ſhew thy Progeny; if not to ſtand,
Caſt thy ſelf down; ſafely if Son of God:
For it is written, He will give command

Concerning thee to his Angels, in their hands
They ſhall up lift thee, leſt at any time
Thou chance to daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone.

To whom thus Jeſus: alſo it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God, he ſaid and ſtood.
But Satan ſmitten with amazement fell
As when Earths Son *Antæus* (to compare
Small things with greateſt) in *Iraſſa* ſtrove
With *Joves Alcides*, and oft foil'd ſtill roſe,
Receiving from his mother Earth new ſtrength,
Freſh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,
Throttl'd at length in the Air, expir'd and fell;
So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
Renewing freſh aſſaults, amidſt his pride
Fell whence he ſtood to ſee his Victor fall.
And as that *Theban* Monſter that propos'd
Her riddle, and him, who ſolv'd it not, devour'd;
That once found out and ſolv'd, for grief and ſpigh
Caſt her ſelf headlong from th' *Iſmenian* ſteep,
So ſtrook with dread and anguiſh fell the Fiend,
And to his crew, that ſat conſulting, brought
oyleſs Triumphals of his hop't ſucceſs,
Ruin, and deſperation, and diſmay,
Who durſt ſo proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell and ſtrait a fiery Globe
Of Angels on full ſail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumy Vans receiv'd him ſoft
From his uneaſie ſtation, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe Air,
Then in a flowry valley ſet him down
On a green bank, and ſet before him ſpred
A table of Celeſtial Food, Divine,
Ambroſial, fruits fetcht from the Tree of Life,

And

And from the fount of Life Ambroſial drink,
That ſoon refreſh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,
Or thirſt, and as he fed, Angelic Quires
Sung Heavenly Anthems of his victory
Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.

True Image of the Father whether thron'd
In the boſom of bliſs, and light of light
Conceiving, or remote from Heaven, enſhrin'd
In fleſhly Tabernacle, and human form,
Wandring the Wilderneſs, whatever place,
Habit, or ſtate, or motion, ſtill expreſſing
The Son of God, with Godlike force indu'd
Againſt th'Attempter of thy Fathers Throne,
And Thief of Paradiſe; him long of old
Thou didſt debel, and down from Heav'n caſt
With all his Army, now thou haſt aveng'd
Supplanted *Adam*, and by vanquiſhing
Temptation, hath regain'd loſt Paradiſe,
And fruſtrated the conqueſt fraudulent:
He never more henceforth will dare ſet foot
In Paradiſe to tempt; his ſnares are broke:
For though that ſeat of earthly bliſs be fail'd,
A fairer Paradiſe is founded now
For *Adam* and his choſen Sons, whom thou
A Saviour art come down to re-inſtall.
Where they ſhall dwell ſecure, when time ſhall be
Of Tempter and Temptation without fear.
But thou, Infernal Serpent, ſhall not long
Rule in the Clouds; like an Autumnal Star
Or Lightning thou ſhalt fall from Heav'n trod down
Under his feet: for proof, e're this thou feel'ſt
Thy wound, yet not thy laſt and deadlieſt wound

By

By this repulſe receiv'd, and hold'ſt in Hell
No triumph; in all her Gates *Abaddon* rues
Thy bold attempt; hereafter learn with aw
To dread the Son of God: he all unarm'd
Shall chaſe thee with the terror of his voice
From thy Demoniac holds, poſſeſſion foul,
Thee and thy Legions, yelling they ſhall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of Swine,
Leſt he command them down into the deep
Bound, and to torment ſent before their time.
Hail Son of the moſt High, heir of both Worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to ſave mankind.

Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek
Sung Victor, and from Heavenly Feaſt refreſht
Brought on his way with joy he unobſerv'd
Home to his Mothers houſe private return'd.

*The* E N D.

# Samſon Agoniſtes,

A

# DRAMATICK

# POEM.

The AUTHOUR

*JOHN MILTON.*

*Ariſtot.* Poet. Cap. 6.

Τραγωδία μίμησις πραξέως σπουδαίας, &c.

*Tragœdia eſt imitatio actionis ſeriæ, &c. Per miſericordiam & metum perficiens talium affectuum luſtrationem.*

*LONDON,*

Printed, and are to be Sold by *Randal Taylor* near Stationers-Hall, MDCLXXXVIII.

## *Of that ſort of Dramatick Poem which is call'd Tragedy.*

TRagedy, as it was anciently compos'd hath been ever held the graveſt, moraleſt, and moſt profitable of all other Poems: therefore ſaid by *Ariſtotle* to be of power by raiſing pity and fear, or terrour, to purge the mind of thoſe and ſuch like paſſions, that is, to temper and reduce them to juſt meaſure with a kind of delight, ſtirr'd up by reading or ſeeing thoſe paſſions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his aſſertion: for ſo in Phyſick things of melancholick hue and quality are us'd againſt melancholy, ſowr againſt ſowr, ſalt to remove ſalt humours. Hence Philoſophers and other graveſt Writers, as *Cicero*, *Plutarch* and others, frequently cite out of Tragick Poets, both to adorn and illuſtrate their diſcourſe. The Apoſtle St. *Paul* himſelf thought it not unworthy to inſert a verſe of *Euripides* into the Text of Holy Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 15. 33. and *Paræus* commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole Book as a Tragedy, into Acts diſtinguiſh'd each by a Chorus of Heavenly Harpings and Song between. Heretofore Men in higheſt dignity have labour'd not a little to be thought able to compoſe a Tragedy. Of that honour *Dionyſius* the elder was no leſs ambitious, than before of his attaining to the Tyranny. *Auguſtus Cæſar* alſo had begun his *Ajax*, but unable to pleaſe his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfiniſht. *Seneca* the Philoſopher is by ſome thought the Authour of thoſe Tragedies (at leaſt the beſt of them) that go under that name. *Gregory Nazianzen*, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeſeeming the ſanctity of his perſon to write a Tragedy, which is entitl'd, *Chriſt ſuffering*. This is mention'd to vindicate Tragedy from the ſmall eſteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; hap'ning through the Poets errour of intermixing Comick ſtuff with Tragick ſadneſs and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar perſons, which by all judicious hath been counted abſurd; and brought in without diſcretion, corruptly to gratifie the people. And though ancient Tragedy uſe no Prologue, yet uſing ſometimes, in caſe of ſelf-defence, or expla-

nation, that which *Martial* calls an Epiſtle; in behalf of this Tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us paſſes for beſt, thus much before-hand may be Epiſtl'd; that *Chorus* is here introduc'd after the *Greek* manner, not ancient onely but modern, and ſtill in uſe among the *Italians*. In the modelling therefore of this Poem, with good reaſon, the Ancients and *Italians* are rather follow'd, as of much more Authority and fame. The meaſure of Verſe us'd in the Chorus is of all ſorts, call'd by the *Greeks Monoſtrophick*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to *Strophe*, *Antiſtrophe* or *Epod*, which were a kind of Stanza's fram'd onely for the Muſick, then us'd with the Chorus that ſung; not eſſential to the Poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into Stanza's or Pauſes, they may be call'd *Allæoſtropha*. Diviſion into Act and Scene referring chiefly to the Stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It ſuffices if the whole Drama be found not produc'd beyond the fifth Act, of the ſtyle and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the Plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but ſuch œconomy, or diſpoſition of the fable as may ſtand beſt with veriſimilitude and decorum; they onely will beſt judge who are not unacquainted with *Æſchylus*, *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, the three Tragick Poets unequal'd yet by any, and the beſt rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumſcription of time wherein the whole Drama begins and ends is according to ancient rule, and beſt example, within the ſpace of 24. hours.

The

# The Argument.

SAmſon *made Captive, Blind, and now in the priſon at* Gaza, *there to labour as in a common work-houſe, on a Feſtival day, in the general ceſſation from labour, comes forth into the open Air, to a place nigh, ſomewhat retir'd, there to ſit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be viſited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who ſeek to comfort him what they can; then by his old Father* Manoa, *who endeavours the like, and withall tells him his purpoſe to procure his liberty by ranſom; a laſtly, that this Feaſt was proclaim'd by the* Philiſtins *as day of Thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of* Samſon, *which yet more troubles him.* Manoa *then departs to proſecute his indeavour with the* Philiſtian *Lords for* Samſon's *redemption; who in the mean while is viſited by other perſons; and laſtly by a publik Officer to require his coming to the Feaſt before the Lords and Peop'e, to play or ſhew his ſtrength in their preſence; he at firſt refuſes, diſmiſſing the publick Officer with abſolute denial to come; at length perſuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the ſecond time with great threatnings to fetch him; the Chorus yet remaining on the place,* Manoa *returns full of joyfull hope, to procure e'er long his Son's deliverance: in the midſt of which diſcourſe an Hebrew comes in haſte confuſedly at firſt; and afterward more diſtinctly relating the Cataſtrophe, what* Samſon *had done to the* Philiſtins, *and by accident to himſelf; wherewith the Tragedy ends,*

The

# The Perſons.

Samſon.

Manoa *the Father of* Samſon.

Dalila *his Wife.*

Harapha *of* Gath.

Publick Officer.

Meſſenger.

Chorus *of* Danites.

*The Scene before the Priſon in* Gaza.

Samſon

# SAMSON AGONISTES.

*Samſ.* A Little onward lend thy guiding hand
To theſe dark ſteps, a little farther on:
For yonder bank hath choice of Sun or ſhade,
There I am wont to ſit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of ſervile toil,
Daily in the common Priſon elſe enjoyn'd me,
Where I a Priſoner chain'd, ſcarce freely draw
The air impriſon'd alſo, cloſe and damp,
Unwholeſome draught: but here I feel amends,
The breath of Heav'n freſh-blowing, pure and ſweet,
With day-ſpring born; here leave me to reſpire.
This day a ſolemn Feaſt the people hold
To *Dagon* their Sea-Idol, and forbid
Laborious works, unwillingly this reſt
Their Superſtition yields me; hence with leave
Retiring from the popular noiſe, I ſeek
This unfrequented place to find ſome eaſe,
Eaſe to the body ſome, none to the mind
From reſtleſs thoughts, that like a deadly ſwarm
Of Hornets arm'd, no ſooner found alone,
But ruſh upon me thronging, and preſent
Times paſt, what once I was, and what am now.
O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold

Twice

Twice by an Angel; who at laſt in ſight
Of both my Parents all in flames aſcended
From off the Altar, where an Off'ring burn'd,
As in a fiery column charioting
His Godlike preſence, and from ſome great act
Or benefit reveal'd to *Abraham*'s race?
Why was my breeding order'd and preſcrib'd
As of a perſon ſeparate to God,
Deſign'd for great exploits; if I muſt die
Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out,
Made of my Enemies the ſcorn and gaze;
To grind in Brazen Fetters under task
With this Heav'n-gifted ſtrength? O glorious ſtrength
Put to the labour of a Beaſt, debas't
Lower than bondſlave! Promiſe was that I
Should *Iſrael* from *Philiſtian* yoke deliver;
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeleſs in *Gaza* at the Mill with ſlaves,
Himſelf in bonds under *Philiſtian* yoke;
Yet ſtay, let me not raſhly call in doubt
Divine Prediction; what if all foretold
Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but my ſelf?
Who this high gift of ſtrength committed to me,
In what part lodg'd, how eaſily bereft me,
Under the Seal of ſilence could not keep,
But weakly to a Woman muſt reveal it
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body ſtrong!
But what is ſtrength without a double ſhare
Of wiſedom, vaſt, unwieldy, burthenſome,
Proudly ſecure, yet liable to fall
By weakeſt ſubtilties, not made to rule,
But to ſubſerve where wiſedom bears command.

God,

God, when he gave me ſtrength, to ſhew withall
How ſlight the gift was, hung it in my Hair.
But Peace, I muſt not quarrel with the will
Of higheſt diſpenſation, which herein
Happ'ly had ends above my reach to know:
Suffices that to me ſtrength is my bane,
And proves the ſource of all my miſeries;
So many, and ſo huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
O loſs of ſight, of thee I moſt complain!
Blind among Enemies, O worſe than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, decrepit age!
Light the prime work of God to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
Inferiour to the vileſt now become
Of man or worm; the vileſt here excell me,
They creep, yet ſee, I dark in light expos'd
To daily fraud, contempt, abuſe and wrong,
Within doors, or without, ſtill as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I ſeem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipſe
Without all hope of day!
O firſt created Beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all;
Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?
The Sun to me is dark
And ſilent as the Moon,
When ſhe deſerts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light ſo neceſſary is to life,
And almoſt life it ſelf, if it be true

That light is in the Soul,
She all in every part; why was the ſight
To ſuch a tender ball as th' eye confin'd?
So obvious and ſo eaſie to be quench't,
And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,
That ſhe might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exil'd from light;
As in the land of darkneſs yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but O yet more miſerable!
My ſelf, my Sepulchre, a moving Grave,
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worſt of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miſeries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhumane foes.
But who are theſe? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet ſteering this way;
Perhaps my enemies who come to ſtare
At my affliction, and perhaps to inſult,
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

*Chor.* This, this is he; ſoftly a while,
Let us not break in upon him;
O change beyond report, thought or belief!
See how he lies at random, careleſly diffus'd,
With languiſh'd head unpropt,
As one paſt hope, abandon'd,
And by himſelf given over;
In ſlaviſh habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'er-worn and ſoild;
Or do my eyes miſrepreſent? Can this be he,

That

That Heroick, that Renown'd,
Irreſiſtible *Samſon*? whom unarm'd
No ſtrength of man, or fierceſt wild beaſt could withſtand;
Who tore the Lion, as the Lion tears the Kid,
Ran on imbattl'd Armies clad in Iron,
And weaponleſs himſelf,
Made Arms ridiculous, uſeleſs the forgery
Of brazen Shield and Spear, the hammer'd Cuiraſs,
*Chalybean* temper'd ſteel, and frock of mail
Adamantean Proof;
But ſafeſt he who ſtood aloof,
When inſupportably his foot advanc'd,
In ſcorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurn'd them to death by Troops. The bold *Aſcalonite*
Fled from his Lion ramp, old Warriors turn'd
Their plated backs under his heel;
Or grovling ſoil'd their creſted helmets in the duſt.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The Jaw of a dead Aſs, his ſword of bone,
A thouſand fore-skins fell, the flower of *Paleſtin*
In *Ramath-lechi* famous to this day:
Then by main force pull'd up, and on his ſhoulders bore
The Gates of *Azza*, Poſt, and maſſie Bar
Up to the Hill by *Hebron*, ſeat of Giants old,
No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded ſo;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heav'n.
Which ſhall I firſt bewail,
Thy Bondage or loſt Sight,
Priſon within Priſon
Inſeparably dark?
Thou art become (O worſt impriſonment!)
The Dungeon of thy ſelf; thy Soul
(Which Men enjoying ſight oft without cauſe complain'd)
Impriſon'd now indeed,

In real darkneſs of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
To incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light alas
Puts forth no viſual beam.
O mirror of our fickle ſtate,
Since man on earth unparallel'd?
The rarer thy example ſtands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongeſt of mortal men,
To loweſt pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.
For him I reckon not in high eſtate
Whom long deſcent of birth
Or the ſphear of fortune raiſes;
But thee whoſe ſtrength, while vertue was her mate,
Might have ſubdu'd the Earth,
Univerſally crown'd with higheſt praiſes.

*Samſ.* I hear the ſound of words, their ſenſe the air
Diſſolves unjointed e'er it reach my ear.

*Chor.* He ſpake, let us draw nigh. Matchleſs in might,
The glory late of *Iſrael*, now the grief,
We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown
From *Eſhtaol* and *Zora*'s fruitfull Vale
To viſit or bewail thee, or if better,
Counſel or conſolation we may bring,
Salve to thy Sores, apt words have power to ſwage
The tumours of a troubl'd mind,
And are as Balm to feſter'd wounds.

*Samſ.* Your coming, Friends, revives me, for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends

Bear

Bear in their Superſcription ( of the moſt
I would be underſtood ) in proſperous days
They ſwarm, but in adverſe withdraw their head
Not to be found, though ſought. Ye ſee, O friends,
How many evils have enclos'd me round;
Yet that which was the worſt now leaſt afflicts me,
Blindneſs, for had I ſight, confus'd with ſhame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who like a fooliſh Pilot have ſhipwreck'd
My Veſſel truſted to me from above,
Gloriouſly rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,
Fool, have divulg'd the ſecret gift of God
To a deceitfull Woman; tell me, Friends,
Am I not ſung and proverb'd for a Fool
In every ſtreet, do they not ſay, how well
Are come upon him his deſerts? yet why?
Immeaſurable ſtrength they might behold
In me, of wiſedom nothing more than mean;
This with the other ſhould, at leaſt, have pair'd,
Theſe two proportion'd ill drove me tranſverſe.

*Chor.* Tax not divine diſpoſal: wiſeſt Men
Have err'd, and by bad Women been deceiv'd;
And ſhall again, pretend they ne'er ſo wiſe.
Deject not then ſo overmuch thy ſelf,
Who haſt of ſorrow thy full load beſides;
Yet truth to ſay, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou ſhouldſt wed *Philiſtian* Woman rather
Than of thine own Tribe fairer, or as fair,
At leaſt of thy own Nation, and as noble.

*Samſ.* The firſt I ſaw at *Timna*, and ſhe pleas'd
Me, not my Parents, that I ſought to wed,
The daughter of an Infidel; they knew not

That

That what I mention'd was of God; I knew
From intimate impulſe, and therefore urg'd
The Marriage on; that by occaſion hence
I might begin *Iſrael*'s Deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely call'd.
She proving falſe, the next I took to Wife
(O that I never had! fond wiſh too late,)
Was in the Vale of *Sorec*, *Dalila*,
That ſpecious Monſter, my accompliſht ſnare.
I thought it lawfull from my former act,
And the ſame end; ſtill watching to oppreſs
*Iſrael*'s Oppreſſours: of what now I ſuffer
She was not the prime cauſe, but I my ſelf,
Who vanquiſht with a peal of words (O weakneſs!)
Gave up my fort of ſilence to a Woman.

*Chor.* In ſeeking juſt occaſion to provoke
The *Philiſtine*, thy Countries Enemy,
Thou never waſt remiſs, I bear thee witneſs:
Yet *Iſrael* ſtill ſerves with all his Sons.

*Samſ.* That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On *Iſrael*'s Governours, and Heads of Tribes,
Who ſeeing thoſe great acts which God had done
Singly by me againſt their Conquerours
Acknowledg'd not, or not at all conſider'd
Deliverance offer'd: I on the other ſide
Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,
The deeds themſelves, though mute, ſpoke loud the doer;
But they perſiſted deaf, and would not ſeem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their Lords the *Philiſtines* with gather'd powers
Enter'd *Judea* ſeeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of *Etham* was retir'd,

Not flying, but fore-caſting in what place
To ſet upon them what advantag'd beſt;
Mean while the men of *Judah* to prevent
The harraſs of their Land beſet me round;
I willingly on ſome conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcis'd a welcom prey,
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threds
Toucht with the flame: on their whole Hoaſt I flew
Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
Their choiceſt youth; they onely liv'd who fled.
Had *Judah* that day join'd, or one whole Tribe,
They had by this poſſeſs'd the Towers of *Gath*,
And lorded over them whom now they ſerve;
But what more oft in Nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to ſervitude,
Than to love Bondage more than Liberty,
Bondage with eaſe than ſtrenuous liberty;
And to deſpiſe, or envy, or ſuſpect
Whom God hath of his ſpecial favour rais'd
As their Deliverer; if he aught begin,
How frequent to deſert him, and at laſt
To heap ingratitude on worthieſt deeds?

*Cho.* Thy words to my remembrance bring
How *Succoth* and the Fort of *Penuel*
Their great Deliverer contemn'd,
The matchleſs *Gideon* in purſuit
Of *Madian* and her vanquiſht Kings:
And how ingratefull *Ephraim*
Had dealt with *Jephtha*, who by argument,
Not worſe than by his ſhield and ſpear
Defended *Iſrael* from the *Ammonite*,
Had not his proweſs quell'd their pride

In

In that ſore battel when ſo many dy'd
Without Reprieve adjudg'd to death,
For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth.*

*Samſ.* Of ſuch examples add me to the roul,
Me eaſily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's propos'd deliverance not ſo.

*Chor.* Juſt are the ways of God,
And juſtifiable to Men;
Unleſs there be who think not God at all,
If any be, they walk obſcure;
For of ſuch Doctrine never was there School,
But the heart of the Fool,
And no man therein Doctour but himſelf.
Yet more there be who doubt his ways not juſt,
As to his own edicts, found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandring thought,
Regardleſs of his Glory's diminution;
Till by their own perplexities involv'd
They ravel more, ſtill leſs reſolv'd,
But never find ſelf-ſatisfying ſolution.
As if they would confine th' interminable,
And tie him to his own preſcript,
Who made our Laws to bind us, not himſelf,
And hath full right to exempt
Whom ſo it pleaſes him by choice
From National obſtriction, without taint
Of ſin, or legal debt;
For with his own Laws he can beſt diſpenſe.
He would not elſe who never wanted means,
Nor in reſpect of the enemy juſt cauſe
To ſet his people free,
Have prompted this Heroick *Nazarite*

Againſt

Againſt his vow of ſtricteſt purity,
To ſeek in marriage that fallacious Bride,
Unclean, unchaſte.
Down Reaſon then, at leaſt vain reaſonings down,
Though Reaſon here aver
That moral verdit quits her of unclean:
Unchaſte was ſubſequent, her ſtain not his.
But ſee here comes thy reverend Sire
With carefull ſtep, Locks white as down,
Old *Manoah*: adviſe
Forthwith how thou oughtſt to receive him.

*Samſ.* Ay me, another inward grief awak'd
With mention of that name renews th' aſſault.

*Man.* Brethren and men of *Dan*, for ſuch ye ſeem,
Though in this uncouth place; if old reſpect,
As I ſuppoſe, toward your once gloryed friend,
My Son now Captive, hither hath inform'd
Your younger feet, while mine caſt back with age
Came lagging after; ſay if he be here.

*Chor.* As ſignal now in low dejected ſtate,
As earſt in higheſt, behold him where he lies.

*Man.* O miſerable change! is this the man,
That invincible *Samſon*, far renown'd
The dread of *Iſrael*'s foes, who with a ſtrength
Equivalent to Angels walk'd their ſtreets,
None offering fight; who ſingle combatant
Duell'd their Armies rank'd in proud array,
Himſelf an Army, now unequal match
To ſave himſelf againſt a coward arm'd
At one ſpears length. O ever failing truſt

In mortal ſtrength! and oh what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay what thing good
Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I pray'd for Children, and thought barrenneſs
In wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a Son,
Such a Son as all men hail'd me happy;
Who would be now a Father in my ſtead?
O wherefore did God grant me my requeſt,
And as a bleſſing with ſuch pomp adorn'd?
Why are his gifts deſirable, to tempt
Our earneſt Prayers, then given with ſolemn hand
As Graces, draw a Scorpions tail behind?
For this did th' Angel twice deſcend? for this
Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a Plant;
Select and Sacred, Glorious for a while,
The miracle of men; then in an hour
Enſnar'd, aſſaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy Foes deriſion, Captive, Poor and Blind,
Into a Dungeon thruſt, to work with Slaves?
Alas methinks whom God hath choſen once
To worthieſt deeds, if he through frailty err,
He ſhould not ſo o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to ſo foul indignities,
Be it but for honours ſake of former deeds.

*Samſ.* Appoint not heavenly diſpoſition, Father,
Nothing of all theſe evils hath befall'n me
But juſtly; I my ſelf have brought them on,
Sole Authour, I, ſole cauſe: if ought ſeem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd
The myſtery of God giv'n me under pledge
Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
A *Canaanite*, my faithleſs enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all ſurpris'd,

But

But warn'd by oft experience : did not ſhe
Of *Timna* firſt betray me, and reveal
The ſecret wreſted from me in her height
Of Nuptial love profeſt, carrying it ſtreight
To them who had corrupted her, my Spies,
And Rivals ? In this other was there found
More Faith ? who alſo in her prime of love,
Spouſal embraces, vitiated with Gold,
Though offer'd onely, by the ſcent conceiv'd
Her ſpurious firſt-born ; Treaſon againſt me ?
Thrice ſhe aſſay'd with flattering prayers and ſighs,
And amorous reproaches to win from me
My capital ſecret, in what part my ſtrength
Lay ſtor'd, in what part ſumm'd, that ſhe might know ;
Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to ſport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worſe
Than undiſſembl'd hate ) with what contempt
She ſought to make me Traitour to my ſelf ;
Yet the fourth time, when muſtring all her wiles,
With blandiſht parlies, feminine aſſaults,
Tongue-batteries, ſhe ſurceas'd not day nor night
To ſtorm me over-watch'd, and wearied out.
At times when men ſeek moſt repoſe and reſt,
I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,
Who with a grain of manhood well reſolv'd
Might eaſily have ſhook off all her ſnares :
But foul effeminacy held me yok'd
Her bond-ſlave ; O indignity, O blot
To Honour and Religion ! ſervile mind
Rewarded well with ſervile puniſhment !
The baſe degree to which I now am fall'n,
Theſe raggs, this grinding, is not yet ſo baſe

As was my former ſervitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
True ſlavery, and that blindneſs worſe than this,
That ſaw not how degenerately I ſerv'd.

*Man.* I cannot praiſe thy Marriage choices, Son,
Rather approv'd them not; but thou didſt plead
Divine impulſion prompting how thou migh'ſt
Find ſome occaſion to infeſt our Foes.
I ſtate not that; this I am ſure our Foes
Found ſoon occaſion thereby to make thee
Their Captive, and their Triumph; thou the ſooner
Temptation found'ſt, or over-potent charms
To violate the ſacred truſt of ſilence
Depoſited within thee; which to have kept
Tacit, was in thy power: true; and thou bear'ſt
Enough, and more the burthen of that fault;
Bitterly haſt thou paid, and ſtill art paying
That rigid ſcore. A worſe thing yet remains,
This day the *Philiſtines* a popular Feaſt
Here celebrate in *Gaza*; and proclaim
Great Pomp, and Sacrifice, and Praiſes loud
To *Dagon*, as their God who hath deliver'd
Thee, *Samſon*, bound and blind into their hands,
Them out of thine, who ſlew'ſt them many a ſlain.
So *Dagon* ſhall be magnifi'd, and God,
Beſides whom is no God, compar'd with Idols,
Diſglorifi'd, blaſphem'd, and had in ſcorn
By the Idolatrous rout amidſt their wine;
Which to have come to paſs by means of thee,
*Samſon*, of all thy ſufferings think the heavieſt,
Of all reproach the moſt with ſhame that ever
Could have befall'n thee and thy Father's houſe.

*Samſ.* Father, I do acknowledge and confeſs
That I this honour, I this pomp have brought
To *Dagon*, and advanc'd his praiſes high
Among the Heathen round; to God have brought
Diſhonour, obloquy, and op't the mouths
Of Idoliſts, and Atheiſts; have brought ſcandal
To *Iſrael*, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propenſe enough before
To waver, or fall off and joyn with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, ſhame and ſorrow,
The anguiſh of my Soul, that ſuffers not
Mine eye to harbour ſleep, or thoughts to reſt.
This onely hope relieves me, that the ſtrife
With me hath end; all the conteſt is now
'Twixt God and *Dagon*; *Dagon* hath preſum'd,
Me overthrown, to enter liſts with God,
His Deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of *Abraham*. He, be ſure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,
But will ariſe and his great name aſſert:
*Dagon* muſt ſtoop, and ſhall e'er long receive
Such a diſcomfit, as ſhall quite deſpoil him
Of all theſe boaſted Trophies won on me,
And with confuſion blank his Worſhippers.

*Man.* With cauſe this hope relieves thee, and theſe words
I as a Prophecy receive: for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his Name
Againſt all competition, nor will long
Endure it, doubtfull whether God be Lord,
Or *Dagon*. But for thee what ſhall be done?
Thou muſt not in the mean while here forgot

Lie

Lie in this miſerable loathſome plight
Neglected. I already have made way
To ſome *Philiſtian* Lords, with whom to treat
About thy ranſome: well they may by this
Have ſatisfi'd their utmoſt of revenge
By pains and ſlaveries, worſe than death inflicted
On thee who now no more canſt doe them harm.

*Samſ.* Spare that propoſal, Father, ſpare the trouble
Of that ſolicitation; let me here,
As I deſerve, pay on my puniſhment;
And expiate, if poſſible, my crime,
Shamefull garrulity. To have reveal'd
Secrets of men, the ſecrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deſerving
Contempt, and ſcorn of all, to be excluded
All friendſhip and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool ſet on his front?
But I God's counſell have not kept, his holy ſecret
Preſumptuouſly have publiſh'd, impiouſly,
Weakly at leaſt, and ſhamefully: A ſin
That *Gentiles* in their Parables condemn
To their abyſs and horrid pains confin'd.

*Man.* Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, Son;
Repent the ſin, but if the puniſhment
Thou canſt avoid, ſelf preſervation-bids;
Or th' execution leave to high diſpoſal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thy ſelf; perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
Who ever more approves and more accepts
(Beſt pleas'd with humble and filial ſubmiſſion)

Him

Him who imploring mercy ſues for life,
Than who ſelf-rigorous chuſes death as due;
Which argues over-juſt, and ſelf-diſpleas'd
For ſelf-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offer'd means, who knows
But God hath ſet before us, to return thee
Home to thy countrey and his Sacred houſe,
Where thou mayſt bring thy off'rings, to avert
His farther ire, with prayers and vows renew'd.

*Samſ.* His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end ſhould I ſeek it? when in ſtrength
All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
With youthfull courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heav'n foretold and high exploits,
Full of divine inſtinct, after ſome proof
Of Acts indeed heroick, far beyond
The Sons of *Anack*, famous now and blaz'd,
Fearleſs of danger, like a petty God
I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded
On hoſtile ground, none daring my affront.
Then ſwoll'n with pride into the ſnare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softn'd with pleaſure and voluptuous life;
At length to lay my head and hollow pledge
Of all my ſtrength in the laſcivious lap
Of a deceitfull Concubine who ſhore me
Like a tame Weither, all my pretious fleece,
Then turn'd me out ridiculous, deſpoil'd,
Shaven, and diſarm'd among mine enemies.

*Chor.*

*Chor.* Deſire of wine and all delicious drinks
Which many a famous Warriour overturns,
Thou couldſt repreſs, nor did the dancing Ruby
Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour or the ſmell,
Or taſte that cheers the hearts of Gods or Men,
Allure thee from the cool Cryſtalline ſtream.

*Samſ.* Whereever fountain or freſh current flow'd
Againſt the Eaſtern ray, tranſlucent, pure,
With touch ætherial of Heav'ns fiery rod
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirſt, and refreſht; nor envy'd them the grape
Whoſe heads that turbulent liquour fills with fumes.

*Chor.* O madneſs, to think uſe of ſtrongeſt wines
And ſtrongeſt drinks our chief ſupport of health,
When God with theſe forbidd'n made choice to rear
His mighty Champion, ſtrong above compare,
Whoſe drink was onely from the liquid brook.

*Sam.* But what avail'd this temperance, not complete
Againſt another object more enticing?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the Foe
Effeminately vanquiſh'd? by which means,
Now blind, diſheartn'd, ſham'd, diſhonour'd, quell'd,
To what can I be uſefull, wherein ſerve
My Nation, and the work from Heav'n impos'd,
But to ſit idle on the houſhold hearth,
A burdenous drone; to viſitants a gaze,
Or pitied object, theſe redundant locks
Robuſtious to no purpoſe cluſtring down,
Vain monument of ſtrength; till length of years

And

And ſedentary numneſs craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obſcure.
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
Till vermin or the draft of ſervile food
Conſume me, and oft invocated death
Haſt'n the welcome end of all my pains.

*Man.* Wilt thou then ſerve the *Philiſtines* with that gift
Which was expreſly giv'n thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie Bed-rid, not onely idle,
Inglorious, unimploy'd, with age out-worn.
But God who caus'd a Fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to ſpring, thy thirſt to allay
After the brunt of Battel, can as eaſie
Cauſe light again within thy eyes to ſpring,
Wherewith to ſerve him better than thou haſt;
And I perſwade me ſo; why elſe this ſtrength
Miraculous yet remaining in thoſe locks?
His might continues in thee not for naught,
Nor ſhall his wondrous gifts be fruſtrate thus.

*Sam.* All otherwiſe to me my thoughts portend,
That theſe dark Orbs no more ſhall treat with light,
Nor th' other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkneſs nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial Spirits droop,
My hopes all flat, Nature within me ſeems
In all her functions weary of her ſelf;
My Race of Glory run, and race of ſhame,
And I ſhall ſhortly be with them that reſt.

*Man.* Believe not theſe ſuggeſtions which proceed
From anguiſh of the mind and humours black,
That mingle with thy fancy. I however

Muſt not omit a Father's timely care
To proſecute the means of thy deliverance
By ranſome, or how elſe: mean while be calm,
And healing words from theſe thy friends admit.

*Sam.* O that torment ſhould not be confin'd
To the bodies wounds and ſores,
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breaſt and reins;
But muſt ſecret paſſage find
To th' inmoſt mind,
There exerciſe all his fierce accidents,
And on her pureſt ſpirits prey,
As on entrails, joints and limbs
With anſwerable pains, but more intenſe,
Though void of corporal ſenſe.
My griefs not onely pain me
As a lingring diſeaſe,
But finding no redreſs, ferment and rage,
Nor leſs than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and feſter, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts my Tormenters arm'd with deadly ſtings
Mangle my apprehenſive tendereſt parts,
Exaſperate, exulcerate, and raiſe
Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can aſſwage,
Nor breath of Vernal Air from ſnowy *Alp.*
Sleep hath forſook and giv'n me o'er
To death's benumming Opium as my onely cure.
Thence faintings, ſwounings of deſpair,
And ſenſe of Heav'ns deſertion.
I was his nurſling once, and choice delight,
His deſtin'd from the womb,

Pro-

Promis'd by Heavenly meſſage twice deſcending,
Under his ſpecial eye
Abſtemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;
He led me on to mightieſt deeds
Above the nerve of mortal arm
Againſt the uncircumcis'd, our enemies.
But now hath caſt me off as never known,
And to thoſe cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,
Left me all helpleſs with th' irreparable loſs
Of ſight, reſerv'd alive to be repeated
The ſubject of their cruelty or ſcorn.
Nor am I in the liſt of them that hope;
Hopeleſs are all my evils, all remedileſs;
This one Prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition, ſpeedy death,
The cloſe of all my miſeries, and the balm.

*Chor.* Many are the Sayings of the Wiſe
In ancient and in modern books enroll'd;
Extolling Patience as the trueſt fortitude;
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life.
Conſolatories writ
With ſtudied argument, and much perſwaſion ſought
Lenient of grief and anxious thought,
But to th' afflicted in his pangs their ſound
Little prevails, or rather ſeems a tune,
Harſh, and of diſſonant mood from his complaint,
Unleſs he feel within
Some ſource of conſolation from above;
Secret refreſhings, that repair his ſtrength,
And fainting ſpirits uphold.

God of our Fathers, what is man!
That thou towards him with hand ſo various,
Or might I ſay contrarious,
Temper'ſt thy providence through his ſhort courſe,
Not ev'nly, as thou rul'ſt
The Angelick orders and inferiour creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That wandring looſe about,
Grow up and periſh, as the ſummer flie,
Heads without name no more remembred,
But ſuch as thou haſt ſolemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,
To ſome great work, thy glory,
And peoples ſafety, which in part they effect:
Yet toward theſe thus dignifi'd, thou oft
Amidſt their height of noon,
Changeſt thy countenance, and thy hand with no regard
Of higheſt favours paſt
From thee on them, or them to thee of ſervice.
Nor onely doſt degrade them, or remit
To life obſcur'd, which were a fair diſmiſſion,
But throw'ſt them lower than thou didſt exalt them high,
Unſeemly falls in humane eye,
Too grievous for the treſpaſs or omiſſion,
Oft leav'ſt them to the hoſtile ſword
Of Heathen and prophane, their Carcaſſes
To dogs and fowls a prey, or elſe captiv'd:
Or to the unjuſt tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingratefull multitude.
If theſe they ſcape, perhaps in poverty
With ſickneſs and diſeaſe thou bow'ſt them down,
Painfull diſeaſes and deform'd,
In crude old age:

Though

Though not diſordinate, yet cauſleſs ſuff'ring
The puniſhment of diſſolute days, in fine,
Juſt or unjuſt, alike ſeem miſerable,
For oft alike, both come to evil end.
So deal not with this once thy glorious Champion,
The Image of thy ſtrength and mighty Miniſter.
What do I beg? how haſt thou dealt already?
Behold him in his ſtate calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canſt, to peacefull end.
But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land?
Female of ſex it ſeems,
That ſo bedeckt, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way ſailing
Like a ſtately Ship
Of *Tarſus*, bound for th' Iſles
Of *Javan* or *Gadier*
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails fill'd, and ſtreamers waving,
Courted by all the winds that hold them play,
An Amber ſcent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damſel train behind;
Some rich *Philiſtian* Matron ſhe may ſeem,
And now at nearer view, no other certain
Than *Dalila* thy Wife.

*Samſ.* My Wife, my Trayt'reſs, let her not come near me.

*Cho.* Yet on ſhe moves, now ſtands and eyes thee fix'd,
About t' have ſpoke, but now, with head declin'd,
Like a fair flower ſurcharg'd with dew, ſhe weeps
And words addreſt ſeem into tears diſſolv'd,
Wetting the borders of her ſilk'n veil:
But now again ſhe makes addreſs to ſpeak.

*Dal.* With doubtfull feet and wavering reſolution
I came, ſtill dreading thy diſpleaſure, *Samſon*,
Which to have merited, without excuſe,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverſe event than I foreſaw)
My penance hath not ſlackn'd, though my pardon
No way aſſu'rd. But conjugal affection
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt
Hath lead me on deſirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy eſtate.
If aught in my ability may ſerve
To light'n what thou ſuffer'ſt, and appeaſe
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in ſome part to recompenſe
My raſh, but more unfortunate miſdeed.

*Samſ.* Out, out *Hyæna*; theſe are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman falſe like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to ſubmit, beſeech,
And reconcilement move with feign'd remorſe,
Confeſs, and promiſe wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
His vertue or weakneſs which way to aſſail:
Then with more cautious and inſtructed skill
Again tranſgreſſes, and again ſubmits;
That wiſeſt and beſt men full oft beguil'd,
With goodneſs princip'l'd not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miſerable days,
Entangl'd with a poyſnous boſome ſnake,

If not by quick deſtruction ſoon cut off
As I by thee, to Ages an example.

*Dal.* Yet hear me, *Samſon*; not that I endeavour
To leſſen or extenuate my offence,
But that on th' other ſide if it be weigh'd
By it ſelf, with aggravations not ſurcharg'd,
Or elſe with juſt allowance counterpois'd,
I may, if poſſible, thy pardon find
The eaſier towards me, or thy hatred leſs.
Firſt granting, as I do, it was a weakneſs
In me, but incident to all our ſex,
Curioſity, inquiſitive, importune
Of ſecrets, then with like infirmity
To publiſh them, both common female faults:
Was it not weakneſs alſo to make known
For importunity, that is, for naught,
Wherein conſiſted all thy ſtrength and ſafety?
To what I did thou ſhewd'ſt me firſt the way.
But I to enemies reveal'd, and ſhould not.
Nor ſhould'ſt thou have truſted that to woman's frailty
E'er I to thee, thou to thy ſelf waſt cruel.
Let weakneſs then with weakneſs come to parl
So near related, or the ſame of kind,
Thine forgive mine; that men may cenſure thine
The gentler, if ſeverely thou exact not
More ſtrength from me, than in thy ſelf was found.
And what if Love, which thou interpret'ſt hate,
The jealouſie of Love, powerfull of ſway
In humane hearts, nor leſs in mine towards thee,
Caus'd what I did? I ſaw thee mutable
Of fancy, fear'd leſt one day thou would'ſt leave me
As her at *Timna*, ſought by all means therefore
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmeſt:

No better way I ſaw than by importuning
To learn thy ſecrets, get into my power
Thy key of ſtrength and ſafety: thou wilt ſay,
Why then reveal'd? I was aſſur'd by thoſe
Who tempted me, that nothing was deſign'd
Againſt thee but ſafe cuſtody, and hold:
That made for me, I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterpriſes,
While I at home ſate full of cares and fears
Wailing thy abſence in my widow'd bed;
Here I ſhould ſtill enjoy thee day and night
Mine and Love's priſoner, not the *Philiſtines*,
Whole to my ſelf, unhazarded abroad,
Fearleſs at home of partners in my love.
Theſe reaſons in Love's law have paſt for good,
Though fond and reaſonleſs to ſome perhaps,
And Love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much wo,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.
Be not unlike all others, not auſtere
As thou art ſtrong, inflexible as ſteel.
If thou in ſtrength all mortals doſt exceed,
In uncompaſſionate anger do not ſo.

*Sam.* How cunningly the Sorſereſs diſplays
Her own tranſgreſſions, to upbraid me mine?
That malice not repentance brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou ſay'ſt, th' example,
I led the way, bitter reproach, but true,
I to my ſelf was falſe e'er thou to me,
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed: which when thou ſeeſt
Impartial, ſelf-ſevere, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy ſeeking, and much rather
Confeſs it feign'd, weakneſs is thy excuſe,

And I believe it, weakneſs to reſiſt
*Philiſtian* gold: if weakneſs may excuſe,
What Murtherer, what Traytor, Paricide,
Inceſtuous, Sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedneſs is weakneſs: that plea therefore
With God or Man will gain thee no remiſſion.
But Love conſtrain'd thee; call it furious rage
To ſatisfie thy luſt: Love ſeeks to have Love;
My love how couldſt thou hope, who took'ſt the way
To raiſe in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I muſt, by thee betray'd?
In vain thou ſtriv'ſt to cover ſhame with ſhame,
Or by evaſions thy crime uncover'ſt more.

*Dal.* Since thou determin'ſt weakneſs for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what aſſaults I had, what ſnares beſides,
What ſieges girt me round, e'er I conſented;
Which might have aw'd the beſt reſolv'd of Men,
The conſtanteſt, to have yielded without blame.
It was not Gold, as to my charge thou lay'ſt,
That wrought with me: thou know'ſt the Magiſtrates
And Princes of my countrey came in perſon,
Solicited, commanded, threatn'd, urg'd,
Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil Duty
And of Religion, preſs'd how juſt it was
How honourable, how glorious to entrap
A common enemy, who had deſtroy'd
Such numbers of our Nation: and the Prieſt
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the Gods
It would be to enſnare an irreligious
Diſhonourer of *Dagon:* what had I
To oppoſe againſt ſuch powerfull Arguments?

Onely my love of thee held long debate;
And combated in ſilence all theſe reaſons
With hard conteſt: at length that grounded maxim
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wiſeſt men; that to the publick good
Private reſpects muſt yield; with grave authority
Took full poſſeſſion of me and prevail'd;
Vertue, as I thought, truth, duty ſo enjoyning.

*Samſ.* I thought where all thy circling wiles would end;
In feign'd Religion, ſmooth hypocriſie.
But had thy love, ſtill odiouſly pretended,
Been, as it ought, ſincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reaſonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my Tribe
And of my Nation choſe thee from among
My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'ſt,
Too well, unboſom'd all my ſecrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but over-powr'd
By thy requeſt, who could deny thee nothing;
Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then
Didſt thou at firſt receive me for thy Husband?
Then, as ſince then, thy countries foe profeſt:
Being once a Wife, for me thou waſt to leave
Parents and countrey; nor was I their ſubject,
Nor under their protection but my own,
Thou mine, not theirs: if aught againſt my life
Thy Countrey ſought of thee, it ſought unjuſtly,
Againſt the law of nature, law of nations,
No more thy Countrey, but an impious crew
Of men conſpiring to uphold their ſtate
By worſe than hoſtile deeds, violating the ends
For which our Countrey is a name ſo dear;
Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee;

To pleaſe thy Gods thou didſt it ; Gods unable
To acquit themſelves and proſecute their Foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own Deity, Gods cannot be :
Leſs therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd,
Theſe falſe pretexts and varniſh'd colours failing,
Bare in thy guilt how foul muſt thou appear ?

*Dal.* In argument with Men a Woman ever
Goes by the worſe, whatever be her cauſe.

*Samſ.* For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath,
Witneſs when I was worried with thy peals.

*Dal.* I was a fool, too raſh, and quite miſtaken
In what I thought would have ſucceeded beſt.
Let me obtain forgiveneſs of thee, *Samſon*,
Afford me place to ſhew what recompence
Towards thee I intend for what I have miſdone,
Miſguided ; onely what remains paſt cure
Bear not too ſenſibly, nor ſtill inſiſt
To afflict thy ſelf in vain : though ſight be loſt,
Life yet hath many ſolaces, enjoy'd
Where other ſenſes want not their delights
At home in leiſure and domeſtick eaſe,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eye-ſight expoſes daily men abroad.
I to the Lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathſome priſon-houſe, to abide
With me, where my redoubl'd love and care
With nurſing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age
With all things gratefull chear'd, and ſo ſupply'd,

That what by me thou haſt loſt thou leaſt ſhalt miſs.

*Samſ.* No, no, of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long ſince are twain;
Nor think me ſo unwary or accurſt
To bring my feet again into the ſnare
Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains
Though dearly to my coſt, thy ginns, and toyls;
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
No more on me have power, their force is null'd,
So much of Adders wiſedom I have learnt
To fence my ear againſt thy Sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and ſtrength, when all men
Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone couldſt hate me
Thy Husband, ſlight me, ſell me, and forgo me;
How wouldſt thou uſe me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in moſt things as a child
Helpleſs, thence eaſily contemn'd, and ſcorn'd,
And laſt neglected? How wouldſt thou inſult
When I muſt live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thraldom, how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the Lords
To gloſs upon, and cenſuring, frown or ſmile?
This Gaol I count the Houſe of Liberty
To thine, whoſe doors my feet ſhall never enter.

*Dal.* Let me approach at leaſt, and touch thy hand.

*Samſ.* Not for thy life, leſt fierce remembrance wake
My ſudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At diſtance I forgive thee, go with that;
Bewail thy falſhood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illuſtrious Women, faithfull Wives:

Cheriſh

Cheriſh thy haſtn'd widowhood with the gold
Of Matrimonial treaſon: ſo farewell.

*Dal.* I ſee thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and ſeas, yet winds to ſeas
Are reconcil'd at length, and ſea to ſhore:
Thy anger unappeaſable, ſtill rages,
Eternal Tempeſt never to be calm'd.
Why do I humble thus my ſelf, and ſuing
For peace, reap nothing but repulſe and hate?
Bid go with evil omen and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounc'd?
To mix with thy concernments I deſiſt
Henceforth, nor too much diſapprove my own.
Fame if not double-fac'd is double-mouth'd,
And with contrary blaſt proclaims moſt deeds,
On both his Wings, one black, th' other white,
Bears greateſt names in his wild aerie flight.
My name perhaps among the Circumcis'd
In *Dan*, in *Judah*, and the bordering Tribes,
To all poſterity may ſtand defam'd,
With malediction mention'd, and the blot
Of falſhood moſt unconjugal traduc'd.
But in my countrey where I moſt deſire,
In *Ecron*, *Gaza*, *Aſdod*, and in *Gath*
I ſhall be nam'd among the famouſeſt
Of Women, ſung at ſolemn feſtivals,
Living and dead recorded, who to ſave
Her countrey from a fierce deſtroyer, choſe
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb
With odours viſited and annual flowers.
Not leſs renown'd than in Mount *Ephraim*,
*Jael*, who with inhoſpitable guile
Smote *Siſera* ſleeping through the Temples nail'd.

Nor ſhall I count it heinous to enjoy
The publick marks of honour and reward
Conferr'd upon me, for the piety
Which to my countrey I was judg'd to have ſhewn.
At this who ever envies or repines
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

*Chor.* She's gone, a manifeſt Serpent by her ſting
Diſcover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

*Samſ.* So let her go, God ſent her to debaſe me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To ſuch a viper his moſt ſacred truſt
Of ſecreſie, my ſafety, and my life.

*Chor.* Yet beauty, though injurious, hath ſtrange power,
After offence returning, to regain
Love once poſſeſt, nor can be eaſily
Repulſt, without much inward paſſion felt
And ſecret ſting of amorous remorſe.

*Samſ.* Love quarrels oft in pleaſing concord end.
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

*Chor.* It is not vertue, wiſedom, valour, wit,
Strength, comlineſs of ſhape, or ampleſt merit
That Woman's love can win or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to ſay,
Harder to hit,
(Which way ſoever Men refer it)
Much like thy riddle, *Samſon*, in one day
Or ſeven, though one ſhould muſing ſit;
If any of theſe or all, the *Timnian* bride
Had not ſo ſoon preferr'd

Thy

Thy Paranymph, worthleſs to thee compar'd
Succeſſour in thy Bed,
Nor both ſo looſly diſally'd
Their nuptials, nor this laſt ſo treacherouſly
Had ſhorn the fatal Harveſt of thy Head.
Is it for that ſuch outward ornament
Was laviſh'd on their Sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haſte unfiniſh'd, judgment ſcant,
Capacity not rais'd to apprehend
Or value what is beſt
In choice, but oftеſt to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of ſelf-love mixt,
Of conſtancy no root infix'd,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
What e'er it be, to wiſeſt Men and beſt
Seeming at firſt all heavenly under virgin Veil,
Soft, modeſt, meek, demure,
Once joyn'd, the contrary ſhe proves, a Thorn
Inteſtine, far within defenſive arms
A cleaving miſchief, in his way to vertue
Adverſe and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him awry enſlav'd
With dotage, and his ſenſe deprav'd
To folly and ſhamefull deeds which ruine ends.
What Pilot ſo expert but needs muſt wreck
Embarqu'd with ſuch a Stears-mate at the Helm?
Favour'd of Heav'n who finds
One vertuous rarely found,
That in domeſtick good combines:
Happy that houſe! his way to peace is ſmooth:
But Vertue which breaks through all oppoſition,
And all temptation can remove,
Moſt ſhines and moſt is acceptable above.

Therefore Gods univerſal Law
Gave to the Man deſpotick power
Over his Female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile ſhe or lowre:
So ſhall he leaſt confuſion draw
On his whole life, not ſway'd
By female uſurpation, or diſmay'd.
But had we beſt retire, I ſee a ſtorm?

*Samſ.* Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

*Chor.* But this another kind of tempeſt brings.

*Samſ.* Be leſs abſtruſe, my riddling days are paſt.

*Chor.* Look now for no inchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honied words; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward, I know him by his ſtride,
The Giant *Harapha* of *Gath*, his look
Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
I leſs conjecture than when firſt I ſaw
The ſumptuous *Dalila* floating this way:
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

*Samſ.* Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

*Chor.* His fraught we ſoon ſhall know, he now arrives.

*Har.* I come not, *Samſon*, to condole thy chance,
As theſe perhaps, yet wiſh it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of *Gath*,
Men call me *Harapha*, of ſtock renown'd

As

As *Og* or *Anak* and the *Emims* old
That *Kariathaim* held, thou know'ſt me now
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd
Incredible to me, in this diſpleas'd,
That I was never preſent on the place
Of thoſe encounters, where we might have try'd
Each others force in camp or liſted field:
And now am come to ſee of whom ſuch noiſe
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to ſurvey,
If thy appearance anſwer loud report.

*Samſ.* The way to know were not to ſee but taſte.

*Har.* Doſt thou already ſingle me? I thought
Gieves and the Mill had tam'd thee. O that fortune
Had brought me to the field where thou art fam'd
To have wrought ſuch wonders with an Aſſes Jaw;
I ſhould have forc'd thee ſoon wiſh other arms,
Or left thy carcaſs where the Aſs lay thrown:
So had the glory of Proweſs been recover'd
To *Paleſtine*, won by a *Philiſtine*
From the unforeskin'd race, of whom thou bear'ſt
The higheſt name for valiant Acts, that honour
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I loſe, prevented by thy eyes put out.

*Samſ.* Boaſt not of what thou wouldſt have done, but do
What then thou wouldſt, thou ſeeſt it in thy hand.

*Har.* To combate with a blind Man I diſdain,
And thou haſt need much waſhing to be touch'd.

*Samſ.* Such uſage as your honourable Lords
Afford me aſſaſſinated and betray'd,

Who durſt not with their whole united powers
In fight withſtand me ſingle and unarm'd,
Nor in the houſe with chamber Ambuſhes
Cloſe-banded durſt attaque me, no not ſleeping,
Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
Breaking her Marriage Faith to circumvent me.
Therefore without feign'd ſhifts let be aſſign'd
Some narrow place enclos'd, where ſight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy Helmet
And Brigandine of braſs, thy broad Habergeon,
Vant-braſs and Greves, and Gauntlet, and thy Spear
A Weavers beam, and ſeven-times-folded ſhield,
I onely with an Oak'n-ſtaff will meet thee,
And raiſe ſuch out-cries on thy clatter'd Iron,
Which long ſhall not with-hold me from thy head,
That in a little time while breath remains thee,
Thou oft ſhalt wiſh thy ſelf at *Gath* to boaſt
Again in ſafety what thou wouldſt have done
To *Samſon*, but ſhalt never ſee *Gath* more.

*Har.* Thou durſt not thus diſparage glorious arms
Which greateſt Heroes have in battel worn,
Their ornament and ſafety, had not ſpells
And black enchantments, ſome Magicians Art
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee ſtrong, which thou from Heaven
Feign'dſt at thy Birth was given thee in thy Hair,
Where ſtrength can leaſt abide, though all thy Hairs
Were briſtles rang'd like thoſe that ridge the back
Of chaf'd wild Boars, or ruffl'd Porcupines.

*Samſ.* I know no Spells, uſe no forbidden Arts;
My truſt is in the living God who gave me

At my Nativity this ſtrength, diffus'd
No leſs through all my ſinews, joints and bones,
Than thine, while I preſerv'd theſe locks unſhorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if *Dagon* be thy god,
Go to his Temple, invocate his aid
With ſolemneſt devotion, ſpread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To fruſtrate and diſſolve theſe Magick ſpells,
Which I to be the power of *Iſrael's* God
Avow, and challenge *Dagon* to the teſt,
Offering to combat thee his Champion bold,
With th' utmoſt of his Godhead ſeconded:
Then thou ſhalt ſee, or rather to thy ſorrow
Soon feel, whoſe God is ſtrongeſt, thine or mine.

*Har.* Preſume not on thy God, what e'er he be,
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and delivered up
Into thy Enemies hand, permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd ſend thee
Into the common Priſon, there to grind
Among the Slaves and Aſſes thy comrades,
As good for nothing elſe, no better ſervice
With thoſe thy boyſt'rous locks, no worthy match
For valour to aſſail, nor by the ſword
Of noble Warriour, ſo to ſtain his honour,
But by the Barbers razor beſt ſubdu'd.

*Samſ.* All theſe indignities, for ſuch they are
From thine, theſe evils I deſerve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Juſtly, yet deſpair not of his final pardon
Whoſe ear is ever open; and his eye

Gratious to re-admit the ſuppliant;
In confidence whereof I once again
Defie thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whoſe God is God,
Thine or whom I with *Iſrael*'s Sons adore.

*Har.* Fair honour that thou doſt thy God, in truſting
He will accept thee to defend his cauſe,
A Murtherer, a Revolter, and a Robber.

*Sam.* Tongue-doughty Giant, how doſt thou prove me theſe?

*Har.* Is not thy Nation ſubject to our Lords?
Their Magiſtrates confeſt it, when they took thee
As a League-breaker and deliver'd bound
Into our hands: for hadſt thou not committed
Notorious murther on thoſe thirty men
At *Askalon*, who never did thee harm,
Then like a Robber ſtripdſt them of their robes?
The *Philiſtines*, when thou hadſt broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee onely ſeeking,
To others did no violence nor ſpoil.

*Samſ.* Among the Daughters of the *Philiſtines*
I choſe a Wife, which argu'd me no foe;
And in your City held my Nuptial Feaſt:
But your ill-meaning Politician Lords,
Under pretence of Bridal friends and gueſts,
Appointed to await me thirty Spies,
Who threatning cruel death conſtrain'd the Bride
To wring from me and tell to them my ſecret,
That ſolv'd the riddle which I had propos'd.
When I perceiv'd all ſet on enmity,
As on my enemies, where ever chanc'd,

I us'd

I us'd hoſtility, and took their ſpoil
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My Nation was ſubjected to your Lords.
It was the force of Conqueſt; force with force
Is well ejected when the Conquer'd can.
But I a private perſon, whom my Countrey
As a league-breaker gave up bound, preſum'd
Single Rebellion and did hoſtile Acts.
I was no private but a perſon rais'd
With ſtrength ſufficient and command from Heav'n
To free my Countrey; if their ſervile minds
Me their deliverer ſent would not receive,
But to their Maſters gave me up for nought,
Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they ſerve.
I was to doe my part from Heav'n aſſign'd,
And had perform'd it if thy known offence
Had not diſabl'd me, not all your force:
Theſe ſhifts refuted, anſwer my appellant
Though by his blindneſs maim'd for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to ſingle fight,
As a petty enterpriſe of ſmall enforce.

*Har.* With thee a man condemn'd, a Slave enrol'd,
Due by the Law to capital puniſhment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

*Samſ.* Cam'ſt thou for this, vain boaſter, to ſurvey me,
To deſcant on my ſtrength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer, part not hence ſo ſlight inform'd;
But take good heed my hand ſurvey not thee.

*Har.* O *Baal-zebub*! can my ears unus'd
Hear theſe diſhonours, and not render death?

*Samſ.*

*Samſ.* No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,
My heels are fetter'd, but my fiſt is free.

*Har.* This inſolence other kind of anſwer fits.

*Samſ.* Go bafflʼd coward, leſt I run upon thee,
Though in theſe chains, bulk without ſpirit vaſt,
And with one buffet lay thy ſtructure low,
Or ſwing thee in the Air, then daſh thee down
To thʼ hazard of thy brains and ſhatter'd ſides.

*Har.* By *Aſtaroth* eʼer long thou ſhalt lament
Theſe braveries in Irons loaden on thee.

*Chor.* His Giantſhip is gone ſomewhat creſt-fallʼn,
Stalking with leſs unconſcionable ſtrides,
And lower looks, but in a ſultrie chafe.

*Samſ.* I dread him not, nor all his Giant-brood,
Though fame divulg'd him Father of five Sons
All of Gigantick ſize, *Goliah* chief.

*Chor.* He will directly to the Lords, I fear,
And with malitious counſel ſtir them up
Some way or other farther to afflict thee.

*Samſ.* He muſt alledge ſome cauſe, and offer'd fight
Will not dare mention, leſt a queſtion riſe
Whether he durſt accept the offer or not,
And that he durſt not plain enough appear'd.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impoſe, nor I ſuſtain;
If they intend advantage of my labours

The

The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no ſmall profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadlieſt foe will prove
My ſpeedieſt friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worſt that he can give, to me the beſt.
Yet ſo it may fall out, becauſe their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruine who attempt the deed

*Chor.* Oh how comely it is and how reviving
To the Spirits of juſt, men long oppreſt!
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the Earth, th' oppreſſour,
The brute and boiſt'rous force of violent men
Hardy and induſtrious to ſupport
Tyrannick power, but raging to purſue
The righteous and all ſuch as honour Truth;
He all their Ammunition
And feats of War defeats
With plain Heroick magnitude of mind
And celeſtial vigour arm'd,
Their Armories and Magazins contemns,
Renders them uſeleſs, while
With winged expedition
Swift as the lightning glance he executes
His errand on the wicked, who ſurpriz'd
Loſe their defence diſtracted and amaz'd.
But patience is more oft the exerciſe
Of Saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own Deliverer,
And Victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict,
Either of theſe is in thy lot,

*Samſon*, with might endu'd
Above the Sons of men; but ſight bereav'd
May chance to number thee with thoſe
Whom Patience finally muſt crown.
This Idols day hath been to thee no day of reſt,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands,
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind.
For I deſcry this way
Some other tending, in his hand
A Sceptre or quaint Staff he bears,
Comes on amain, ſpeed in his look
By his habit I diſcern him now
A Publick Officer, and now at hand,
His meſſage will be ſhort and voluble.

*Off. Hebrews* the Pris'ner *Samſon* here I ſeek.

*Chor.* His manacles remark him, there he ſits.

*Off. Samſon*, to thee our Lords thus bid me ſay;
This day to *Dagon* is a ſolemn Feaſt,
With Sacrifices, Triumph, Pomp and Games;
Thy ſtrength they know ſurpaſſing humane race,
And now ſome publick proof thereof require
To honour this great Feaſt, and great Aſſembly;
Riſe therefore with all ſpeed and come along,
Where I will ſee thee heartn'd and freſh clad
To appear as fits before th' illuſtrious Lords.

*Samſ.* Thou know'ſt I am an *Hebrew*, therefore tell them,
Our Law forbids at their Religious Rites
My preſence; for that cauſe I cannot come.

*Off.*

*Off.* This anſwer be aſſur'd, will not content them.

*Samſ.* Have they not ſword-players, and ev'ry ſort
Of Gymnick Artiſts, Wreſtlers, Riders, Runners,
Juglers and Dancers, Anticks, Mummers, Mimirs,
But they muſt pick me out with ſhackles tir'd,
And over-labour'd at their publick Mill,
To make them ſport with blind activity?
Do they not ſeek occaſion of new quarrels
On my refuſal to diſtreſs me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou cam'ſt, I will not come.

*Off.* Regard thy ſelf, this will offend them highly.

*Samſ.* My ſelf? my conſcience and internal peace.
Can they think me ſo broken, ſo debas'd
With corporal ſervitude, that my mind ever
Will condeſcend to ſuch abſurd commands?
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jeſter,
And in my midſt of ſorrow and heart-grief
To ſhew them feats, and play before their god,
The worſt of all indignities, yet on me
Joyn'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

*Off.* My meſſage was impos'd on me with ſpeed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy reſolution?

*Samſ.* So take it with what ſpeed thy meſſage needs.

*Off.* I am ſorry what this ſtoutneſs will produce.

*Samſ.* Perhaps thou ſhalt have cauſe to ſorrow indeed.

*Chor.* Conſider, *Samſon*; matters now are ſtrain'd
Up to the height, whether to hold or break;
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another meſſage more imperious,
More Lordly thund'ring than thou well wilt bear.

*Samſ.* Shall I abuſe this Conſecrated gift
Of ſtrength, again returning with my hair
After my great tranſgreſſion, ſo requite
Favour renew'd, and add a greater ſin
By proſtituting holy things to Idols;
A *Nazarite* in place abominable
Vaunting my ſtrength in honour to their *Dagon*?
Beſides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
What act more execrably unclean, prophane?

*Chor.* Yet with this ſtrength thou ſerv'ſt the *Philiſtines*,
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean.

*Samſ.* Not in their Idol-worſhip, but by labour
Honeſt and lawfull to deſerve my food
Of thoſe who have me in their civil power.

*Chor.* Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

*Samſ.* Where outward force conſtrains, the ſentence holds.
But who conſtrains me to the Temple of *Dagon*,
Not dragging? the *Philiſtian* Lords command.
Commands are no conſtraints. If I obey them,
I doe it freely, ventring to diſpleaſe
God for the fear of Man and Man prefer,
Set God behind: which in his jealouſie

Shall

Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveneſs,
Yet that he may diſpenſe with me or thee
Preſent in Temples at Idolatrous Rites
For ſome important cauſe, thou needſt not doubt.

*Chor.* How thou wilt here come off ſurmounts my reach.

*Samſ.* Be of good courage, I begin to feel
Some rouzing motions in me which diſpoſe
To ſomething extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this Meſſenger will go along,
Nothing to doe, be ſure, that may diſhonour
Our Law, or ſtain my vow of *Nazarite.*
If there be ought of preſage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By ſome great act, or of my days the laſt.

*Chor.* In time thou haſt reſolv'd, the man returns.

*Off. Samſon,* this ſecond meſſage from our Lords
To thee I am bid ſay. Art thou our Slave,
Our Captive, at the publick Mill our drudge,
And dar'ſt thou at our ſending and command
Diſpute thy coming? come without delay;
Or we ſhall find ſuch Engines to aſſail
And hamper thee, as thou ſhalt come of force,
Though thou art firmlier faſtn'd than a Rock.

*Samſ.* I could be well content to try their Art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet knowing their advantages too many,
Becauſe they ſhall not trail me through their ſtreets
Like a wild Beaſt, I am content to go.
Maſters commands come with a power reſiſtleſs

To ſuch as owe them abſolute ſubjection;
And for a life who will not change his purpoſe?
(So mutable are all the ways of men)
Yet this be ſure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

*Off.* I praiſe thy reſolution, doff theſe links:
By this compliance thou wilt win the Lords
To favour, and perhaps to ſet thee free.

*Samſ.* Brethren farewell, your company along
I will not wiſh, leſt it perhaps offend them
To ſee me girt with Friends; and how the ſight
Of me as of a common Enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exaſperate them
I know not: Lords are Lordlieſt in their wine;
And the well-feaſted Prieſt then ſooneſt fir'd
With zeal, if aught Religion ſeem concern'd:
No leſs the People on their Holy-days
Impetuous, inſolent, unquenchable;
Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing diſhonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law; my Nation or my ſelf,
The laſt of me or no I cannot warrant.

*Chor.* Go, and the Holy One
Of *Iſrael* be thy guide
To what may ſerve his glory beſt, and ſpread his name
Great among the Heathen round:
Send the Angel of thy Birth to ſtand
Faſt by thy ſide, who from thy Father's field
Rode up in flames after his meſſage told
Of thy conception, and be now a ſhield
Of fire; that Spirit that firſt ruſht on thee

In

In the Camp of *Dan*
Be efficacious in thee now at need.
For never was from Heaven imparted
Meaſure of ſtrength ſo great to mortal ſeed;
As in thy wond'rous actions hath been ſeen.
But wherefore comes old *Manoa* in ſuch haſte
With youthfull ſteps? much livelier than e'er while
He ſeems: ſuppoſing here to find his Son,
Or of him bringing to us ſome glad news?

*Man.* Peace with you, Brethren; my inducement hither
Was not at preſent here to find my Son,
By order of the Lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at their Feaſt.
I heard all as I came, the City rings
And numbers thither flock, I had no will,
Leſt I ſhould ſee him forc'd to things unſeemly.
But that which mov'd my coming now, was chiefly
To give you part with me what hope I have
With good ſucceſs to work his liberty.

*Chor.* That hope would much rejoyce us to partake
With thee; ſay, reverend Sire, We thirſt to hear.

*Man.* I have attempted one by one the Lords
Either at home, or through the high ſtreet paſſing,
With ſupplication prone and Fathers tears
To accept of ranſome for my Son their pris'oner,
Some much averſe I found and wondrous harſh,
Contemptuous, proud, ſet on revenge and ſpite;
That part moſt reverenc'd *Dagon* and his prieſts,
Others more moderate ſeeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and State
They eaſily would ſet to ſale, a third

More generous far and civil, who confeſs'd
They had enough reveng'd, having reduc'd
Their foe to miſery beneath their fears,
The reſt was magnanimity to remit,
If ſome convenient ranſome were propos'd.
What noiſe or ſhout was that? it tore the Skie.

*Chor.* Doubtleſs the people ſhouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,
Or at ſome proof of ſtrength before them ſhown.

*Man.* His ranſome, if my whole inheritance
May compaſs it, ſhall willingly be paid
And number'd down: much rather I ſhall chuſe
To live the pooreſt in my Tribe, than richeſt,
And he in that calamitous priſon left.
No, I am fixt not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my Patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forgo
And quit: not wanting him, I ſhall want nothing.

*Chor.* Fathers are wont to lay up for their Sons,
Thou for thy Son art bent to lay out all;
Sons wont to nurſe their Parents in old age,
Thou in old age car'ſt how to nurſe thy Son
Made older than thy age through eye-ſight loſt.

*Man.* It ſhall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him ſitting in the houſe, enobl'd
With all thoſe high exploits by him atchiev'd,
And on his ſhoulders waving down thoſe locks,
That of a Nation arm'd the ſtrength contain'd:
And I perſuade me God hath not permitted
His ſtrength again to grow up with his hair

Garriſon'd

Garriſon'd round about him like a Camp
Of faithfull Souldiery, were not his purpoſe
To uſe him farther yet in ſome great ſervice,
Not to ſit idle with ſo great a gift
Uſeleſs, and thence ridiculous about him.
And ſince his ſtrength with eye-ſight was not loſt,
God will reſtore him eye-ſight to his ſtrength.

*Chor.* Thy hopes are not ill founded nor ſeem vain
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
Conceiv'd, agreeable to a Father's love,
In both which we, as next, participate.

*Man.* I know your friendly minds and—O what noiſe!
Mercy of Heav'n what hideous noiſe was that!
Horribly loud unlike the former ſhout.

*Chor.* Noiſe call you it or univerſal groan
As if the whole inhabitation periſh'd,
Bloud, death, and deathfull deeds are in that noiſe,
Ruine, deſtruction at the utmoſt point.

*Man.* Of ruine indeed me-thought I heard the noiſe,
Oh it continues, they have ſlain my Son.

*Chor.* Thy Son is rather ſlaying them, that outcry
From ſlaughter of one Foe could not aſcend.

*Man.* Some diſmal accident it needs muſt be;
What ſhall we doe, ſtay here or run and ſee?

*Chor.* Beſt keep together here, leſt running thither
We unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the *Philiſtines* is fall'n,

From

From whom could elſe a general cry be heard?
The ſufferers then will ſcarce moleſt us here,
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if his eye-ſight (for to *Iſrael*'s God
Nothing is hard) by miracle reſtor'd,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of ſlaughter'd walk his way?

*Man.* That were a joy preſumptuous to be thought.

*Chor.* Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?

*Man.* He can I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet Hope would fain ſubſcribe and tempts Belief.
A little ſtay will bring ſome notice hither.

*Chor.* Of good or bad ſo great, of bad the ſooner;
For evil news rides poſt, while good news baits.
And to our wiſh I ſee one hither ſpeeding,
An *Hebrew*, as I gueſs, and of our Tribe.

*Meſſ.* O whither ſhall I run, or which way flie
The ſight of this ſo horrid ſpectacle
Which earſt my eyes beheld and yet behold?
For dire imagination ſtill purſues me.
But providence or inſtinct of nature ſeems,
Or reaſon though diſturb'd, and ſcarce conſulted
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To the firſt reverend *Manoa*, and to theſe
My Countreymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at ſome diſtance from the place of horrour,
So in the ſad event too much concern'd.

*Man.*

*Man.* The accident was loud, and heard before thee
With ruefull cry, yet what it was we hear not,
No Preface needs, thou ſeeſt we long to know.

*Meſſ.* It would burſt forth, but I recover breath
And ſenſe diſtract, to know well what I utter.

*Man.* Tell us the ſum, the circumſtance defer.

*Meſſ. Gaza* yet ſtands, but all her Sons are fall'n,
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n.

*Man.* Sad, but thou know'ſt to *Iſraelites* not ſaddeſt
The deſolation of a Hoſtile City.

*Meſſ.* Feed on that firſt, there may in grief be ſurfeit.

*Ma.* Relate by whom. *Meſſ.* By *Samſon.* *Ma.* That ſtill leſſens
The ſorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

*Meſſ.* Ah *Manoa*, I refrain, too ſuddenly
To utter what will come at laſt too ſoon;
Leſt evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear ſhould pierce too deep.

*Man.* Suſpenſe in news is torture, ſpeak them out.

*Meſſ.* Then take the worſt in brief, *Samſon* is dead.

*Man.* The worſt indeed, O all my hope's defeated
To free him hence! but death who ſets all free
Hath paid his ranſome now and full diſcharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd

Hopefull of his Delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the firſt-born bloom of ſpring
Nipt with the lagging rere of winters froſt.
Yet e'er I give the reins to grief, ſay firſt,
How dy'd he? death to life is crown or ſhame.
All by him fell thou ſay'ſt, by whom fell he,
What glorious hand gave *Samſon* his deaths wound?

*Meſſ.* Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

*Man.* Wearied with ſlaughter then or how? explain.

*Meſſ.* By his own hands.

*Man.* Self-violence? what cauſe
Brought him ſo ſoon at variance with himſelf
Among his Foes? *Meſſ.* Inevitable cauſe
At once both to deſtroy and be deſtroy'd;
The Edifice where all were met to ſee him
Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

*Man.* O laſtly over-ſtrong againſt thy ſelf!
A dreadfull way thou took'ſt to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but while things yet
Are in confuſion, give us if thou canſt,
Eye-witneſs of what firſt or laſt was done,
Relation more particular and diſtinct.

*Meſſ.* Occaſions drew me early to this City,
And as the gates I entr'd with Sun-riſe,
The morning Trumpets Feſtival proclaim'd
Through each high ſtreet: little I had diſpatch'd,
When all abroad was rumour'd that this day
*Samſon* ſhould be brought forth to ſhew the people

Proof of his mighty ſtrength in feats and games;
I ſorrow'd at his captive ſtate, but minded
Not to be abſent at that ſpectacle.
The building was a ſpecious Theatre
Half-round on two main Pillars vaulted high,
With ſeats where all the Lords and each degree
Of ſort, might ſit in order to behold,
The other ſide was op'n, where the throng
On banks and ſcaffolds under Skie might ſtand;
I among thoſe aloof obſcurely ſtood.
The Feaſt and noon grew high, and Sacrifice
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine
When to their ſports they turn'd. Immediately
Was *Samſon* as a publick ſervant brought,
In their ſtate Livery clad; before him Pipes
And Timbrels, on each ſide went armed guards,
Both horſe and foot before him and behind
Archers, and Slingers, Cataphracts and Spears.
At ſight of him the people with a ſhout
Rifted the Air clamouring their god with praiſe,
Who had made their dreadfull enemy their thrall.
He patient but undaunted where they led him,
Came to the place, and what was ſet before him
Which without help of eye might be aſſay'd,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he ſtill perform'd
All with incredible, ſtupendious force,
None daring to appear Antagoniſt.
At length for intermiſſion ſake they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requeſted
(For ſo from ſuch as nearer ſtood we heard)
As over-tir'd to let him lean a while
With both his armes on thoſe two maſſie Pillars
That to the arched roof gave main ſupport.
He unſuſpicious led him; which when *Samſon*

Felt in his armes, with head a while enclin'd,
And eyes faſt fixt he ſtood, as one who pray'd,
Or ſome great matter in his mind revolv'd.
At laſt with head erect thus cry'd aloud,
Hitherto, Lords, what your commands impos'd
I have perform'd, as reaſon was, obeying,
Nor without wonder or delight beheld.
Now of my own accord ſuch other tryal
I mean to ſhew you of my ſtrength, yet greater;
As with amaze ſhall ſtrike all who behold.
This utter'd, ſtraining all his nerves he bow'd,
As with the force of winds and waters pent,
When Mountains tremble, thoſe two maſſie Pillars
With horrible convulſion to and fro,
He tugg'd, he took, till down they came and drew
The whole roof after them, with burſt of thunder
Upon the heads of all who ſate beneath,
Lords, Ladies, Captains, Councellors, or Prieſts,
Their choice Nobility and flower, not onely
Of this but each *Philiſtian* City round
Met from all parts to ſolemnize this Feaſt.
*Samſon* with theſe immixt, inevitably
Pull'd down the ſame deſtruction on himſelf;
The vulgar onely ſcap'd who ſtood without.

*Chor.* O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou haſt fulfill'd
The work for which thou waſt foretold
To *Iſrael*, and now ly'ſt victorious
Among thy ſlain ſelf-kill'd
Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold,
Of dire neceſſity, whoſe law in death conjoin'd
Thee with thy ſlaughter'd foes in number more
Than all thy life had ſlain before.

*Semichor.*

*Semichor.* While their hearts were jocond & ſublime,
Drunk with Idolatry, drunk with Wine,
And fat regorg'd of Bulls and Goats,
Chaunting their Idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread who dwells
In *Silo* his bright Sanctuary:
Among them he a ſpirit of phrenzie ſent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urg'd them on with mad deſire
To call in haſte for their deſtroyer;
They onely ſet on ſport and play
Unweetingly importun'd
Their own deſtruction to come ſpeedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men
Fall'n into wrath divine,
As their own ruine on themſelves to invite,
Inſenſate left, or to ſenſe reprobate,
And with blindneſs internal ſtruck.

*Semichor.* But he though blind of ſight,
Deſpis'd and thought extinguiſh'd quite,
With inward eyes illuminated
His fierie virtue rouz'd
From under aſhes into ſudden flame,
And as an ev'ning Dragon came,
Aſſailant on the perched rooſts,
And neſts in order rang'd
Of tame villatick Fowl; but as an Eagle
His cloudleſs thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue giv'n for loſt,
Depreſt, and overthrown, as ſeem'd,
Like that ſelf-begott'n Bird
In the *Arabian* woods emboſt,

That

That no ſecond knows nor third,
And lay e'er while a Holocauſt,
From out her aſhie womb now teem'd,
Revives, reflouriſhes, then vigorous moſt
When moſt unactive deem'd,
And though her body die, her fame ſurvives,
A ſecular Bird ages of lives.

*Man.* Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cauſe, *Samſon* hath quit himſelf
Like *Samſon*, and heroickly hath finiſh'd
A life Heroick, on his Enemies
Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the Sons of *Chaptor*
Through all *Philiſtian* bounds. To *Iſrael*
Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occaſion,
To himſelf and Father's houſe eternal fame;
And which is beſt and happieſt yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
But favouring and aſſiſting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breaſt, no weakneſs, no contempt,
Diſpraiſe, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death ſo noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Sok'd in his enemies bloud, and from the ſtream
With lavers pure and cleanſing herbs waſh off
The clodded gore. I with what ſpeed the while
(*Gaza* is not in plight to ſay us nay)
Will ſend for all my kindred, all my friends
To fetch him hence and ſolemnly attend
With ſilent obſequie and funeral train
Home to his Father's houſe: there will I build him

A Monument,

A Monument, and plant it round with ſhade
Of Laurel ever green, and branching Palm,
With all his Trophies hung, and Acts enroll'd
In copious Legend, or ſweet Lyrick Song.
Thither ſhall all the valiant youth reſort,
And from his memory inflame their breaſts
To matchleſs valour, and adventures high:
The Virgins alſo ſhall on feaſtfull days
Viſit his Tomb with flowers, onely bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loſs of eyes.

*Chor.* All is beſt, though we oft doubt,
What th' unſearchable diſpoſe
Of higheſt wiſedom brings about,
And ever beſt found in the cloſe.
Oft he ſeems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns
And to his faithfull Champion hath in place
Bore witneſs gloriouſly; whence *Gaza* mourns
And all that band them to reſiſt
His uncontrollable intent,
His ſervant he with new acquiſt
Of true experience from this great event
With peace and conſolation hath diſmiſt,
And calm of mind all paſſion ſpent.

THE END.